
A Step into The Past

Book 02

Huang Yi

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Chapter 1

Marquis Zhao Mu

Xiang Shaolong and Lady Ya who was dressed as a commoner walked towards the guesthouse, talking and laughing along the way happily.

Lady Ya replied, “I’ve heard much about the guesthouses for warriors, but everyone advised me not to go, saying that the people in those places are complicated. The Wu guesthouse and Guo guesthouse are the most superior, warriors without some status are not even qualified to stay in there,”

Xiang Shaolong’s interest was a little stirred and he said, “So the guesthouse I am staying in is so superior? I don’t even know that, I’m not even sure how many warriors are staying there and who they are.”

Lady Ya asked, “Don’t tell me you don’t even know that Lian Jin is staying there!”

Xiang Shaolong was stunned, “Really?” No wonder he brought Wu Tingwei there the other day.

He went back in a fury last night, would he do something to Shu’er? Once he thought of that, he wished that he could sprout wings and fly back to the guesthouse.

Lady Ya was about to speak when the expression on her face suddenly turned

awkward.

Xiang Shaolong followed the direction of her gaze and saw that among the passers-by at the opposite street, there's a group of 10 odd warriors surrounding aggressive looking burly man with a scarred who stood tall and straight, wearing brocade robes. He had just turned his head around and was staring at them.

Lady Ya lowered her head and told him quietly, "Go quickly!"

She walked quickly forward with Shaolong running along behind her, full of questions.

From the corner of his eyes, he saw 2 of the warriors leaving the group and dashing across the busy streets filled with traveling horse carriages. They ran after them and one of them called out loudly, "Lady please hold!"

Lady Ya stopped and sighed helplessly. Xiang Shaolong can only stop together with her.

The two went up to them and gave an unfriendly stare to Xiang Shaolong first before bowing respectfully towards Lady Ya and said, "The Marquis invites Lady Ya over for a meeting."

Xiang Shaolong thought that Lady Ya would certainly refuse, but instead she sighed and said, "Go back first, and tell Marquis I will go and see him after leaving some instructions."

The two of them looked at Xiang Shaolong rudely before walking back to the street opposite.

Lady Ya looked at him in fright before lowering her head and said, "Shaolong! I'm sorry! I can't accompany you today, can I look for you a little later?"

Xiang Shaolong felt fury rising him for no reason and asked, "Who is that Marquis? Why is it that he can take you away from me with just one word?"

Lady Ya pleaded, "Please don't ask, I'm going!" and left.

Xiang Shaolong looked as Lady Ya walked towards the scar faced burley man dressed in finery among the group. He put his arms around her tiny waist and hugged her, and Xiang Shaolong felt as if someone has given him a punch to his chest.

He's getting more and more confused about the relationships among these people. With Lady Ya's status, why does she seem afraid of this Marquis, and allowed him to hug and embrace her in front of him, obviously making him lose face in the process.

He stood there stunned for a moment, with difficulty breathing, feeling extremely humiliated but with nowhere to vent his frustration.

It's really bad to get involved with a slut, you'd never know how many other men she has. He didn't even want to know anything about this Marquis, and don't even want to see Lady Ya ever again.

Sounds of hooves beat were heard.

Xiang Shaolong was jolted from his thought and looking up, saw Li Shan and a few warriors rushing towards him in a frenzy, calling, “Brother Xiang! We just went to Lady Ya’s place to look for you and were told you just left with Lady Ya.”

Xiang Shaolong had a bad feeling and asked, “What is the matter?”

Li Shan cried out sadly, “Shu’er has been raped and killed!”

These words sounds like lightning striking from heaven, and he retreated several steps in shock, knocking into a wall behind him, the blood totally gone from his face.

He flipped the blanket open, Shu’er’s naked and wounded lifeless body laid coldly on the ground, the fresh blood flowing out from her eyes already coagulated into a dark black.

The thing that killed her was the red road twined around her neck, and it had cut deep into the neck. Her lower body was in a mess.

Shu’er is dead! Murdered in the most humiliating and cruel way.

Xiang Shaolong felt his body turn icy, unable to accept this reality in front of him at all.

Su Bu’s death happened away from him, he did not see with his own eyes.

Besides, coming to this era 2000 years ago, everything seemed surreal, and even death seems like a joke. He may have been sad but he was not overwrought, so when he was busy with other matters, he could easily put aside the matter of Su Nu's suicide, or even forget about it. But Shu'er is another matter altogether!

His heart is bleeding!

The voice of Tao Fang, who was standing next to him seems to be coming from some place far away, saying, "When Chunying went into the room this morning, Shu'er is already like this. Hail! I really don't know what to say either, the murderer must be someone in this guesthouse."

Xiang Shaolong has no wish to ask anything at all.

The only people who would dare to touch Shu'er would be Wu Tingwei and Lian Jin. He doesn't believe that Wu Tingwei will have the guts, so the murderer must be Lian Jin. He knows that there's nothing he can do to him, at least he dare not touch him before the duel.

So he will try to deal blows to him unscrupulously.

And no one would speak up for a gift from Yan, including Tao Fang and Wu Yingyuan.

He has never felt like killing a person so much.

Tao Fang added, "Why don't you move in and stay with me! My wife and

daughters all want to meet you very much.”

Xiang Shaolong calmly covered Shu'er totally with the blanket, shook his head and said, “No! I am going to sleep here, but from this moment on I won't need anyone to serve me, and don't let anyone come here. Let me help Shu'er prepare for her last rites! I want to be alone with my thoughts.”

Tao Fang said worriedly, “Shaolong! Don't torture yourself, tomorrow night is the crucial night where you will have your duel with Lian Jin, now the whole city is waiting to find out the outcome.”

Xiang Shaolong became as calm and cold as ice and said calmly, “Don't worry! No one places more importance to the appointment tomorrow night as much as I do.”

After going through so many cruel setbacks, he finally kept his blithe behavior aside and turned back into the killing machine that his era has trained him to be, a cold warrior who will use any methods in order to complete a mission.

Xiang Shaolong stayed in the room where Shu'er was murdered for the whole afternoon.

He did not wail, nor did he weep.

Only the weak will feel sadness.

In this warring states period, in this period that most people will do anything,

even evil, if it can benefit themselves, only the strong will survive. When he took a look at Shu'er's body again, he deeply felt the cold heartlessness of reality, felt that this is a lawless society where the strong will rule.

If he wants revenge, he'll have to become the strongest.

When Tao Fang and the rest left the courtyard, he picked up the wooden sword and concentrated hard on practicing his swordplay, studying the intricacies of the Mozi Swordplay.

After his heart melded with his soul, he repeatedly practiced the most intricate 10 moves in the swordplay.

Mozi Swordplay places more importance in defense rather than offense, but each defensive move also hides an opportunity to attack.

If he can improve on the attacks, then the swordplay that only defends will be able to turn into something that can attack and defend at the same time. Once he thought of this, he felt an overwhelming joy. He waved the sword and for a moment the movements were unpredictable, powerful and unconstrained.

He was getting into the swordplay and he jumped out into the hall, using the wider area to practice and at the same time incorporating his knowledge of anatomy and mechanics into the swordplay.

The sword swished, one moment it's unpredictable and formless, another moment it's powerful and free.

Every attack is an evolution from the defensive moves in the Mozi swordplay.

He roared and struck continuously over a hundred times, none of the moves using any form of defense.

He retracted his sword, moving the wooden sword to between his brows, staring straight at the sword.

A petite person ran into the hall, crying out in alarm, "Shaolong!"

Xiang Shaolong put his wooden sword down and Wu Tingfang has already thrown herself into his arms, crying piteously, "Shaolong, Shaolong!"

On one hand Xiang Shaolong pointed the sword to the floor, and with the other hand held the beauty in his arms. Once again he thought of thought of Shu'er's horrible death and felt as if all his innards are twisted together. He said sadly, "You know about Shu'er."

Wu Tingfang nodded her head, sobbing uncontrollably, feeling sad for him.

He lifted her pear-shaped but tear stained face and looked at him through her tears, saying, "Master Tao came to look for Father, asking about Brother's whereabouts. I was still upset with you then for not coming to look for me, but once I heard about Shu'er I ignored Father's opposition and came here immediately. Shaolong! Brother has been locked up by Father since yesterday morning, he definitely is not involved in this."

Xiang Shaolong nodded his head, "Don't worry! I already know who the

murderer is.”

Wu Tingfang lowered her head and asked quietly, “Are you suspecting Lian Jin. He... may be a proud person, but he is actually... hai! It can’t be him, right?” Xiang Shaolong sighed, “He is pursuing you, naturally he will pretend to be a gentleman in front of you. Tell me, who lured your brother to look for Shu’er?”

Wu Tingfang was at a loss for words, but she still looks as if she cannot believe Lian Jin would do something so cruel.

A dry cough sounded from outside the door and the two of them hurriedly separated.

Tao Fang walked in and made an eye at Xiang Shaolong, indicating that he has something to tell him.

Xiang Shaolong told Wu Tingfang, “Why don’t Miss go back first, I’ll come and see you immediately after I’ve settled some matters.”

Wu Tingfang said impatiently, “No! At the most I will wait for you at a side.

Tao Fang looked at her in surprise, he did not expect such a spoiled and pampered Miss would actually be so clingy and obedient towards Xiang Shaolong.

Xiang Shaolong said helplessly, “All right then! You can sit here for a while, I’ll go with Master Tao to the garden and have our talk and ask him to do

something for me!"

Wu Tingfang saw that he did not allow her to listen to his conversation with Tao Fang and was initially unhappy, until she heard the last sentence, and she agreed happily."

The two of them went to the garden and Tao Fang's expression was somber. He was quiet for a moment before saying, "Does Shaolong know who is the person who really wields power in Handan?"

Xiang Shaolong asked in surprise, "Isn't it his Majesty?"

Tao Fang surveyed the quiet garden, and after making there there's no one around besides the warriors near the entrance, he put his hand on his shoulder and said quietly, "On the surface it seems that he has the greatest power, but there is one person who can influence and control him. This person is the real ruler of Zhao."

Xiang Shaolong furrowed his brows, "Who can influence his Majesty?"

Tao Fang smiled bitterly, "It's his man?"

Xiang Shaolong exclaimed hoarsely, "What?"

Tao Fang sighed, "It's a known fact that our Majesty likes men. According to the news from the Palace, every time our Majesty sees this person, he will change into female clothing, do you understand my meaning!"

Xiang Shaolong asked in surprise, "Who is this person?" And secretly thought, no wonder Wu Yingyuan has no wish of marrying Wu Tingfang into the Palace, and the King of Zhao is willing to give up a great beauty like Wu Tingfang.

Tao Fang lowered his voice, "It's the Marquis of Julu, Zhao Mu. This person is the best strategist and swordsman in the state of Zhao. He also has a lot of highly skilled exponents under him, and he often has strange and mysterious guests from all over the world. He is the most powerful person after our ruler Zhao Sheng."

Xiang Shaolong remembered the Marquis who forcefully summoned Lady Ya, without a doubt he must be Zhao Mu. No wonder Lady Ya is so afraid of him, and asked, "Is Lady Ya his woman?"

Tao Fang was stunned and asked, "How did you know?"

Xiang Shaolong hurriedly told him what happened that morning.

Tao Fang's expression looked even worse and after asking more questions, he said, "To the Marquis of Ju Lu, Zhao Ya is only one of his interesting toys. He possesses countless beautiful women and men, and in the past he bet on the fact that once Prince Pingyuan passes away, he will have no more worries. Now, besides my Master, Guo Zhong and a few senior generals, the rest all paid him no heed. The rest of the royalty is angry with him but dare not speak out."

Xiang Shaolong felt this is all a headache, but at least he is now clearer on the

power balance in the state of Zhao.

Tao Fang added generously, “Before the battle of Chang Ping, our state may be isolated further away, our people and land are less comparatively, but our army is unparalleled in the world. We have well versed strategists like Lin Xiangru who kept thwarting the evil plans of the Qins, military men like Zhao She, Lian Po, Li Mu and Prince Pingyuan Zhao Sheng is both well versed in literature and martial arts. With him as the premier, there’s nothing the Qins can do to us. But after King Hui and these generation of famous officials and generals passed away, our King Xiaocheng does not even use his head. Instead he listened to the words of Zhao Gua, the son of Zhao She, and resulting in the terrible battle at Changping, making us turn into a weak country from a strong one. What a pity.”

Xiang Shaolong remembered that the person responsible for this battle of Changping, Zhao Gua, is the husband of Lady Ya, so he took the chance to ask, “Why did his Majesty use Zhao Gua to replace Lian Po?”

Tao Fang shook his head and said sadly, “It’s all because he’s eloquent. This person is born good looking, and good at analyzing, adept in the art of military studies. When he debates, even his father Zhao She, who has defeated the huge Qin army with a lot less men cannot win him. But Zhao She thinks that he’s not good enough to be a general. That’s why when his Majesty wanted to appoint him as a general, even Madam Zhao She objected. It’s just that his Majesty was persuaded by his pretty words and grand plans and insisted on his decision.”

Xiang Shaolong was baffled, “Why would Zhao She think so badly of his son?”

Tao Fang sighed, “Because Zhao She can see that his precious son thinks too highly of his own intelligence and refuses to listen to others. He only knows how to theorize and is obstinate. No one can win him in a debate, but he cannot win anyone in a fight.”

He continued with anger, “The battle of Changping, he was at a most advantageous position, and the previous commander Lian Po did the groundwork for him as well, cutting the resources of the Qin soldiers who are far from home and tiring them out. Who would have expected that once he arrived, he ordered the whole army to leave the city and rashly went into the enemy’s territory. In the end not only did the Qins counterattacked and forced them back into the city and cut off their line of supply. In slightly over a month their rations were used up and the city taken over. The Qins attacked and went on a murderous spree that is the most cruel in history. There’s no way his Majesty can defend himself on his decision, if he had not changed Lian Po with Zhao Gua, this would not have happened.” He then lowered his voice and continued, “Eldest Young Master Yingyuan is disillusioned with his Majesty because of this matter, does Shaolong understand now?”

Xiang Shaolong knows that Tao Fang has received instructions from Wu Yingyuan, and totally trusts him now. He asked, “Why did Master Tao suddenly mention the Marquis of Ju Lu, Zhao Mu?”

Tao Fang said seriously, “Because he came with Lian Jin last night to the guesthouse, and only left at dawn. And to use red ropes to kill beauties, happens to be one of his many hobbies, he has done it quite a few times.”

Xiang Shaolong was startled, “What?”

Tao Fang replied, “Don’t be agitated, and you must not act rashly, or else you will be killed. Although he usually does not bother about Zhao Ya’s affairs, but for the first time Zhao Ya kept you overnight for 2 nights, so his jealousy is certainly aroused. After the instigation and plan offered by that evil thief Lian Jin, who knows how to use others to do the killing best, this happened. That’s why Lian Jin has his support in the duel tomorrow, and will certainly try his best to kill you. But if you kill Lian Jin, he will maneuver his Majesty into punishing you. I’ve discussed this situation with Eldest Young Master, and decided to let you know the situation.”

Once again Xiang Shaolong wishes that he has a heavy machine gun in his hands, a pity that he only has a wooden sword. There are some things that even the Master Wu cannot help, much less Wu Yingyuan or Tao Fang.

Tao Fang advised him, “You better not leave the house so often for these few days. If you can defeat Lian Jin and gain the trust of his Majesty, Zhao Mu may change his attitude towards you. By then Eldest Young Master will have another grand plan, but everything can only be revealed after the duel.”

The corners of Xiang Shaolong’s mouth revealed a slightly cruel smile and said, “I know what to do.”

Tao Fang felt a shiver down his heart and reminded him, “When you see Zhao Mu, you must pretend that nothing happened. This person is narrow minded and if you offend him, he will certainly take revenge.”

Xiang Shaolong smiled bitterly in his heart, what kind of a world is this.

By the time he returned to the room, Wu Tingfang is already pouting from the wait.

Xiang Shaolong is still pained over the death of Shu'er and has no mood to be intimate with her. After having a short heart-to-heart talk with her, he asked, "If there comes a day I have to leave the state of Zhao, would Fang'er be willing to let go of everything else and come far away with me?"

Wu Tingfang was stunned, "But what about Father and Mother?"

Xiang Shaolong replied, "Let's not think about them first, I'm only asking for your thoughts."

Obviously Wu Tingfang is not used to having her own ideas, and replied after some hesitation, "Of course I will follow you, but Father and Mother must not be affected."

Xiang Shaolong replied understandingly, "Of course, I won't care only about myself and not care about your parents and family."

Wu Tingfang shifted over happily and threw herself into his arms, pouted her cute little mouth and asked, "Shaolong! Will you kiss me?" It's the first time she's experienced this, naturally she's not sick of it yet.

There's no way Xiang Shaolong could reject her, and besides this is not a painful task, so he hugged and kissed her.

In a short while Wu Tingfang was writhing, her face burning, and proactively massaged his shoulder blades.

Xiang Shaolong remembered that he has to preserve his strength and was secretly startled. He left her sweet mouth, and coercing and pacifying her, managed to force her to go home.

Tao Fang and a large group of warriors are already waiting for her at the main door with horses, and when he saw Xiang Shaolong escorting her out, he heaved a sigh of relieve.

After what happened to Shu'er and Su Nu, no one dared to be lax about any woman who is close to Xiang Shaolong. Although Wu Tingfang's status is different from the other 2 women who died terribly, but no one can guarantee that the same thing will not happen to her. And no one will be able to take responsibility for that outcome.

Before she got up the horse, Wu Tingfang held Xiang Shaolong and said, "I can only see you tomorrow night. Grandfather has promised to bring me into the Palace to see your duel, you must not lose!"

She was about to get up the horse when Lian Jin walked out from the guesthouse and called loudly, "Grand Young Miss, please hold!"

When enemies meet, they cannot see eye to eye with each other.

But Xiang Shaolong already has a plan, and did not reveal any of his inner feelings at all. He even moved to the side to look at the reaction Wu Tingfang

has towards this ex-boyfriend.

Lian Jin did not even glance at Xiang Shaolong or Tao Fang, but just took large strides towards Wu Tingfang.

Wu Tingfang stole a glance at Xiang Shaolong, and replied a little helplessly, “Brother Lian! I’m in a hurry to go home.”

Lian Jin looked at her deeply, his face broke out into a smile that will charm any woman and said gently, “Then let brother here send you back!”

Wu Tingfang was surprised and after stealing another look at the expressionless Xiang Shaolong, she shook her head, “There’s no need! Master Tao will send me back.”

Lian Jin looked heavenward and laughed, sweeping an unhappy gaze and Xiang Shaolong, Tao Fang and the rest before sneering, “He can’t even protect his own woman, so how can they be good enough to protect Grand Young Miss.”

The expressions on Tao Fang and the 10 odd warriors darkened at once, but Xiang Shaolong was calm as usual, not revealing the anger burning in his heart, but only watching with cold eyes.

Tao Fang exclaimed furiously, “Lian Jin you better be careful with your words.”

Wu Tingfang was never really that polite to Tao Fang in the past, but because

of Xiang Shaolong, she likes whomever he trusts, and said, "How can you say that, go back quickly, I don't need you to escort me."

Lian Jin looked at Xiang Shaolong from the side of his eyes and said with an icy smile towards Wu Tingfang, "Has Grand Young Miss forgot our everlasting oath to each other?"

Wu Tingfang threw a glance at Xiang Shaolong in fear and stamped her feet, "Don't talk nonsense, who made everlasting..."

Lian Jin smiled and said, "We'll argue after tomorrow night!" And he told Xiang Shaolong confidently, "Just wait and see! Now even Lady Ya will not be able to protect you." And left after saying these words.

Wu Tingfang has never been thus humiliated and she cried out, "I am going to tell Grandfather."

Lian Jin's reply is a loud laughter, as if he can't be bothered about Master Wu as well.

Xiang Shaolong and Tao Fang exchanged a look, both feeling that something is not right.

Will Zhao Mu really back him up, why else would he be so haughty?

Xiang Shaolong has just returned to the room when someone reported to him that Lady Ya has sent a horse carriage for him.

Xiang Shaolong remembered what happened this morning and fury rising up so he rejected her.

After dinner, he studied the Mozi swordplay again, and felt that it is really profound and marvelous to be able to push the human body beyond borders.

As he was engrossed in it, Lady Ya has arrived personally.

Xiang Shaolong continued ignoring her, until she threw herself into his arms before he asked with furrowed brows, "Why do you still come here?"

Lady Ya cried sadly, "Shaolong! I'm sorry."

Xiang Shaolong was about to speak when he felt as if his neck has been bitten by a poisonous mosquito and he looked at her in surprise, only to see her holding a fine needle in her slender fingers. The sharp end of the needle shone with a strange green tint, he felt his senses getting hazy and lost consciousness.

Chapter 2

The trap of lust

When Lady Ya's men were carrying him up the carriage, Xiang Shaolong woke up but his body still felt weak.

Lady Ya sat in the carriage and let him put his head on her lap, gently caressing his hair, once in a while sighing, obviously unaware that he has regained consciousness.

Xiang Shaolong did not find it strange at all. Because she does not know that he has undergone 'anti-body training' for drugs before and was injected with many kinds of antibodies, and is able to withstand many times more than the average person various kinds of medication and poison.

The poison from the needle could have been cultivated from plants. It can cause him to lose consciousness and strength temporarily but will not harm his body or cause long term damage. By now he feels that his body is slowly regaining its strength.

Why would she want to deal with him?

He felt a strange sensation on his face, it turns out to be Lady Ya's tears dripping onto his face.

The carriage moved, obviously no one dared to stop her carriage.

Lady Ya sighed daintily and mumbled, “Shaolong do not blame me, I am forced to do it. If I don’t, we’ll all end up in a bad state.”

Xiang Shaolong is not an idiot, so how can he not guess that this is the plot of the Marquis of Ju Lu, Zhao Mu. However he could not figure out why he would plan this, no matter how bold he is, he wouldn’t dare to harm him so openly right? But why would he help an ‘outsider’ like Lian Jin deal with him who should be ‘one of his man’?”

Lady Ya’s anxious breathing calmed, and she remained silent.

Naturally Xiang Shaolong continued to pretend to be unconsciousness and took the opportunity to rest so that he can deal with the enem’s next step.

The carriage suddenly stopped.

Followed by the sound of the door opening.

Lady Ya’s dainty body shook and she quietly exclaimed, “Marquis!”

The Marquis came into the carriage, the door closed and the carriage continued on its way.

Lady Ya’s breathing hastened again and she asked in shock, “What are you going to do?”

A melodious and deep voice said, “Nothing! Just testing his reaction.”

Xiang Shaolong was secretly sneering to himself, already know what the other party is planning to do and thought to himself that he knows how this is done as well. He concentrated and willed his body to relax.

Indeed he felt a sharp pain on his thigh, and he was stabbed by the other party's sharp weapon.

Lady Ya asked, "Do you not trust me?"

Zhao Mu laughed, "It's better to play safe, how would I know that you will not join forces with him to trick me."

Lady Ya was thinking of protesting when her body suddenly leaned forward and her tiny mouth made gurgling noises, obviously the other party is now kissing her.

Xiang Shaolong even felt the Marquis hand going over his prone body, roaming all over Lady Ya's body. Listening to the sound of the clothes, Zhao Mu's hands must have reached into Lady Ya's clothing.

Lady Ya moaned daintily.

Zhao Mu laughed lecherously, "You s.lut, getting more and more well endowed."

Lady Ya panted, "Haven't you tortured me enough today?" and she continued moaning again.

Although Xiang Shaolong could not see, he can imagine all the awful things that is happening and felt a surge of jealousy. He forced himself to suppress that feeling and vowed never to harbor any more love for Lady Ya. Especially when this wanton is writhing so much, obviously unable to withstand the ministrations of the other party.

The Lady Ya now is worthless in his mind.

Zhao Mu let go of Lady Ya and smiled evilly, "You want it again?"

Lady Ya leaned weakly on the back of the chair, her whole body heated and did not make a sound.

Zhao Mu said with a chuckle, "If I were to marry you, Zhao Ya will you give up this lad and follow me?"

Lady Ya sighed and said, "Marquis don't make fun of me, the one you took a fancy to is Wu Tingfang, why would it be a hated and used person like me?"

Zhao Mu who is sitting opposite her reached his hand out to caresses her breast again and laughed, "It's so bouncy, so how can it be used. Fine! I won't force you, as long as you listen to me and work for me, this lad will be yours tomorrow night."

Xiang Shaolong finally understood, no wonder Zhao Mu hated him so much, it's all because of this exquisite beauty Wu Tingfang.

Lady Ya allowed herself to be molested and moaned, "I really do not

understand, even if Xiang Shaolong lose, Master Wu will definitely not give his precious granddaughter to you, so what's the use of you dealing with Xiang Shaolong?"

Zhao Mu replied smugly, "I have my plans, you do not have to concern yourself. Hei! Tell me, between this lad and me, whose touch gives you the most pleasure?" He increased the intensity of his touches.

Lady Ya stammered, "Of course it's you who makes me feel better."

Zhao Mu's voice turned icy as he asked, "Then why is it when I used this lad to do an exchange with you, you surrendered immediately?"

Lady Ya exclaimed quietly, "Marquis your hands are hurting me."

Zhao Mu asked furiously, "Answer me first!"

Xiang Shaolong was so furious he almost wanted to draw his dagger and kill him, but of course he cannot do that, because he has a bigger goal, which is to kill Lian Jin.

Lady Ya replied helplessly, "Because you only have lust for me, but for him, besides lust, there's love as well."

Zhao Mu released Lady Ya, and after a long moment he calmed down enough to say, "After he's awake, Cuiniang will feed him one 'Lust' pill. If you cannot handle it yourself, then ask Cuiniang to replace you, you must not force yourself. After that let him sleep deeply for 6 hours before waking him up.

Lady Ya asked worriedly, "Will it really be alright?"

Zhao Mu smiled icily, "Look at how concerned you are over him, I really feel like killing this lad. Don't worry! Besides expanding a lot of energy because of the aphrodisiac, everything else will be the same. It's just that he will be destined to lose in that duel with Lian Jin. Remember, you have to accompany Lian Jin tomorrow night, and after that I will not bother in your affairs in future"

The carriage stopped.

After Zhao Mu left the carriage, the horse started moving again.

Xiang Shaolong was secretly exclaiming that it's a close shave. This is indeed a devious plan, using women to cause him harm without leaving any trace, formidable indeed.

Luckily he is Xiang Shaolong. If it's anyone else, that person won't even know how he died, and may even blame himself for not being able to control his lust.

Xiang Shaolong was carried into Lady Ya's bedroom and after the servants left, only Lady Ya and that woman called Cuiniang whom the Marquis has ordered to supervise them were around.

He was secretly cracking his brain, how can he hide from these 2 women? If the aphrodisiac melts on contact with the mouth, he won't have enough time to spit it out.

Footsteps were heard moving away.

Xiang Shaolong took the risk and peeped through his lids, and saw Lady Ya with a voluptuous and flirtatious looking woman standing a distance away, arguing about something.

He had a flash of idea, and tore away a corner of his shirt and stuffed it into his mouth, sealing the food passage.

The two ladies walked back again and Lady Ya exclaimed unhappily, “Is the Marquis really that distrustful of me!”

Cuiniang replied obsequiously, “Lady please forgive me, the Marquis ordered me to witness the whole process. He’s already giving Lady face, or else he loves to see such things the most. If it is not me but him watching the whole thing, Lady would be even more embarrassed.”

Lady Ya did not protest further, and quietly accepted this arrangement. He could hear the sound of the wax pill being opened, followed by a strange fragrance wafting into his nose.

A pill about the size of a thumb was stuffed into his mouth, dropping right into the piece of torn cloth.

Cuiniang said with a laugh, “Done! This pill melts on contact with the tongue and will flow into the throat. No matter how chaste or strong willed that person is, he will not be able to fight it.”

The aphrodisiac may have been separated by a piece of cloth, but it's swiftly melting.

Cuiniang said as she walked away, "Let me get some water to wake him up."

Lady Ya ran after her and asked, "What if he wakes up and found out that I've given him aphrodisiac, won't he hate me then?"

Xiang Shaolong was afraid that the aphrodisiac will seep through the wet cloth into his throat and was just lamenting about it when he saw this chance to hurriedly spit out the cloth and hid it under the pillow.

Cuiniang replied with a laugh, "Don't worry! He's under the influence of the drug and will be in a semiconscious state. The only thing he knows is that he must do his best, so Lady just enjoy yourself! I can see that he's as strong as an ox, maybe Lady will beg me to take over later!"

Lady Ya gave a cold snort, feeling offended.

Cuiniang does not seem to be afraid of her and left with a coquettish smile.

Lady Ya returned to his side, heaved a sigh, and loosened his clothes.

After a moment Cuiniang returned and cleaned his face with cold water, and was baffled, "This person's constitution must be really unique, his skin has not even turned red."

Xiang Shaolong laughed secretly to himself, and with a roar, pretended that

the drug has taken effect and hugged the two women, at the same time using the moves he learnt from military training, he used his thumb to press hard on the acupoint behind their necks. Before they have a chance to scream, they collapsed from the pressure of the thumb.

They will only lose consciousness for a few minutes, but it's enough for him to start his plan.

He took out the damp cloth from under the pillow and after feeding them half of the melted, gluey aphrodisiac each, Xiang Shaolong sat calmly at the side.

In a short moment their skin turned fresh red, they started twisting and moaning, and slowly regained consciousness.

Xiang Shaolong was secretly exclaiming that the drug is formidable, and retreated to a corner to see what will happen. When the 2 women were in the throes of passion, they do not care if the other party is male or female. When they started tearing each other's clothes, he put his mind at ease.

So a little aphrodisiac is already so formidable, if he were to swallow the whole pill, he won't be able to take it even if his body is made from metal. Lady Ya and Cuiniang's actions were becoming more and more intolerable, the bedroom was filled with their moans and screams.

Xiang Shaolong closed his eyes and meditated according to how Yuan Zong taught him, eliminating all thoughts from his mind, blocking out the sounds in the room. Without knowing how much time has passed, when the two ladies

were finally quiet, he opened his eyes.

The two women were lying in a messy heap on the rug, their chests heaving, and asleep from extreme fatigue.

Xiang Shaolong smiled, burned the piece of cloth over the lamp before lying down between the two women and pulled the blanket over the three of them and went to sleep.

That night he dreamt of a bleeding Shu'er, crying piteously for him to avenge her. HE screamed and struggled to wake up from this nightmare, and it's already noon.

The 2 ladies were gone and only a pretty maid was waiting at the side. When she saw that he's awake, she immediately knelt down and paid her respects, saying, "The Eldest Young Master Wu is waiting for Master Xiang at the main hall, is Master Xiang all right!"

Xiang Shaolong pretended to be trembling and dizzy and called out, "Water! Get me some water!"

The pretty maid smiled, "Master Xiang has over-exerted yourself last night, Lady was like you too."

Xiang Shaolong was secretly laughing that the maid is just like the mistress, she doesn't seem to be of good character. He reached out and grabbed her tender bosom.

The pretty maid left with a smile.

Xiang Shaolong put on an act and pretended to be uneasy on his feet, staggering into the hall.

Wu Yingyuan and Tao Fang was accompanied by the listless looking Lady Ya, and on seeing him, they both looked furious, thinking that he has let himself down so terribly.

When Lady Ya saw him coming out, she looked guilt-stricken. She stood up and was about to speak when Xiang Shaolong fell over and fainted on the floor.

This move spared the need for all talk.

He decided to hide this from Wu Yingyuan and Tao Fang for the time being as well so that Zhao Mu and Lian Xin will really believe their plan worked and will fall into his trap instead.

Wu Yingyuan and Tao Fang were angry and anxious, and hurriedly sent him back to the guesthouse.

When they put him on the rug, Wu Yingyuan said seriously, "Something's wrong, I think Shaolong has been deviously tricked by Lady Ya. Master Tao, go and get Miracle Hand Huang here, see if he can recover his strength before the duel." After he spoke he heaved a long sigh, full of regret and anger.

Xiang Shaolong snapped open his eyes and sat up.

The both of them were startled, and stared at him dumbly.

Xiang Shaolong smiled helplessly, “If I were to keep on pretending to be unconscious, it’ll be more difficult than giving me a beating.”

The two of them were ecstatic and hurriedly asked him what was happening. After Xiang Shaolong told them the whole process, the two of them laughed so hard they were clutching their bellies.

Wu Yingyuan hurriedly told Tao Fang to instruct the other warriors to guard the guesthouse and not allow anyone to come in.

Tao Fang sat down after he returned and said, “Shaolong is really formidable. The poison from the needle must have been cultivated from the sap of the fainting grass. Once injected into the bloodstream, even a horse will lose consciousness, but I didn’t expect that you’ll have no fear of it.”

Wu Yingyuan replied, “Heaven must be on our side, how does Shaolong intend to make use of this advantage?”

Xiang Shaolong replied, “I’ll just react according to circumstances! I will definitely shock that Zhao Mu and Lian Jin.”

Tao Fang said, “Lady Ya sent someone over to ask about your situation earlier, I’ve chased that person away. If she comes and see you personally, do you want to see her?”

Wu Yingyuan replied, “It’s better not to meet.”

Xiang Shaolong said, “The aphrodisiac may be formidable, but hearing what Zhao Mu said, it seems that one will recover some of his strength after sleeping for a few hours, but will definitely not be able to handle an intense fight!”

Wu Yingyuan replied, “That is the reason, or else if Lian Jin was to win without a fight, how can he show off in front of his Majesty and all the court officials.

Xiang Shaolong agreed, “I agree with Eldest Young Master’s words. I should not see anyone at all, and let the enemy think that I’m trying my best to regain my strength, then I won’t have to put on so much of an act tonight.”

Tao Fang replied, “But at least Shaolong must pretend to be tired. Before we leave I will put some gray powder on your face, then nothing will go wrong.”

Once they said this, the three of them can’t help but chortle again.

The Zhao Palace is in the middle of Handan city, surrounded by walls everywhere, the river moat deep and broad, it’s almost like a city within a city.

The feast will be held in the Xiangrui Great Hall in the Palace.

The King of Zhao’s imperial seat was on the north facing the main door, on both sides there were each 40 tables placed, all facing the large empty plaza

in the middle. There were 2 rows of tables front and back, each table can seat 10 people. Those seated in the front rows are naturally for royalty and the senior court officials, while the tables behind are for their families and warriors with special status.

The nearer the tables are to the King of Zhao, the higher ranking the people. Master Wu and Guo Zhong, the two most wealthiest people, are seated on the third table on the left and third table on the right respectively. As such it can be seen how important these two people are in Zhao.

After all the guests entered, they went to their own tables and sat down. They placed their heads close to each other as they spoke, not daring to make any loud noises. The atmosphere was tense and serious.

When Master Wu walked in with the dazzling dressed Wu Tingfang and Wu Tingwei, they immediately captured the attention of everyone, firstly because of Wu Tingfang's outstanding beauty, but all the more because the two contestants in the duel tonight are both swordsman from the Wu Mansion.

Guo Zhong, who was already seated, stood up and walked over. After saying a few polite words, he went nearer to his ear and whispered, "I heard that last night Xiang Shaolong even went to Lady Ya's place for fun. How can he accomplish anything great if he lets himself down thus, it seems that he will certainly lose tonight."

This Guo Zhong was average sized, about 40 years old, his face fair and without a blemish but his eyes were bright and smart. When he spoke he is full

of expressions, and seems like a person with no ill intent. But all who knows him will know how good he is at hiding daggers behind his smiles.

Master Ma, who is at least two sizes taller and larger than him was secretly furious, on one hand unhappy that Xiang Shaolong is so lax, on the other hand because Guo Zhong was insinuating that he is blind to place his bets on the wrong person to duel with the invincible Lian Jin. He can only smile condescendingly and said, "You have a lot of men under you, why don't you find someone for a duel and let us have an eye-opener."

As the two of them were debating, Zhao Mu, with a long sword scar starting from the lobe of his left ear and ending on the corner of his mouth, together with the beautiful yet tired looking Lady Ya arrived under the protection of a few warriors. All the court officials hurriedly paid their respects to him, which shows how unique his status is.

Zhao Mu stood straight, his shoulders broad, the scar on his face did not make him become ugly, instead it added to his male attraction. Although he is more than 30, he is very well maintained and handsome looking. His brows are exceptionally thin, the bridge of his nose hooked like an eagle, paired with his long and slim yet shiny eyes, he gives others the feeling that he is not to be trifled with.

He saw Wu Tingfang who is next to Master Wu and his eyes shone immediately. He went forward and said, "Miss Tingfang, it's been a long time since we met."

After Wu Tingfang paid her respects, she said coldly, "Marquis, how do you

do!"

Master Wu and Guo Zhong dared not be rude, so they turned around and greeted him as well.

Right at this time there was a commotion near the door, it turns out to be Wu Hei who has come in with the proud and handsome looking Lian Jin who is dressed in warrior's attire.

Lian Jin looked energetic and smug, greeting everyone with a smile, and at the same time flirting with the beauties with his eyes.

By now almost all the guests have arrived. The women tied their hair up in the palace fashion and were formally dressed for the feast, either wearing jewelry that was embroidered on their clothes, swaying along or they were wearing long robes reaching the knees, revealing the underskirt, with a coat hanging on them. When their hands extend from the broad sleeves, matching gold bangles coiled around the arms, with jade rings on their slender fingers and pearls on their ears. The jade belt around their waist hung fragrance pouches, and for a moment the fragrance and the dazzling display is enough to make one dizzy.

The men were wearing crowns on their head, long robes, the back of their robes sewn to look like a swallow's tail, and looked like an opposing complement to the ladies.

Wu Tingfang has heard about how Lady Ya forcefully invited Xiang Shaolong to her residence, and saw that everyone's attention was on Lian Jin. She

moved over to Lady Ya's side and whispered angrily into her ear, "Why did you harm Shaolong. If anything happens to him, I will not let you off."

Lady Ya was stunned for a moment, and when she was speechless, Lian Jin had walked over with large strides. She thought of how she has to accompany him tonight, and for a moment felt shame and anger, and lowered her head.

Wu Hei (Hei = black), who is next to Lian Jin, really lives up to his name. His face and eyes were dark, his body short and stout with a square face and large ears, but his eyes were long and narrow. Ha made Lian Jin who is at least a head taller than him looks dashing in comparison.

Lian Jin first paid his respects to Zhao Mu, Master Wu and Guo Zhong but when his gaze shifted over to Wu Tingfang and Lady Ya, a strange, complicated expression flashed past his eyes.

By then another few senior court officials joined their circle, and the atmosphere became more celebratory.

Lian Jin was thinking of slipping over and flirting with the 2 ladies when Zhao Mu suddenly said, "If Boss Wu agrees, I would like to invite Lian Jin to be seated at my table."

Everyone was stunned. By saying that, Zhao Mu is opening asking for Lian Jin from Master Wu, to place Lian Jin under his banner.

Lian Jin did not expect him to do this and was extremely surprised. The

expression of Wu Hei's face changed. If Lian Jin were to agree, then he can forget about staying on in the Wu family.

Master Wu was secretly furious, but he smiled on the surface and said, "If Lian Jin wants to, why would I not agree." Obviously he's making Lian Jin decide.

Lian Jin was secretly cursing Zhao Mu. It must be known that people in this era places much importance on loyalty between master and servant. A mercenary must be loyal to his master, never to waver in his whole life. Now that Zhao Mu has forced him to make a decision, if he agrees, others will certainly ostracize him. In the end the only way he can survive is if he works only for Zhao Mu.

But he is now placed in a difficult position, so he gritted his teeth and replied, "I thank Marquis for your compliment, how dare I refuse."

Everyone was quiet, and looked at Master Wu.

After all Master Wu has been through a lot of experiences, and he laughed loudly, "Lian Jin you must try your best to fight for his Marquis's glory tonight, you can only win and not lose!" The underlying meaning is that if he loses, he can forget about staying on in Handan.

Lian Jin and Zhao Mu exchanged looks and laughed at the same time.

Master Wu and Guo Zhong are all wily old foxes, and once they heard the smugness hidden in the laughter, they knew that something must be going

on, and both looked towards Lady Ya who still had her head bowed at the same time.

Naturally Lady Ya knows why the two of them were laughing so happily, and suddenly felt an overwhelming regret. She thought of how Xiang Shaolong will be humiliated in front of others later, and quickly walked towards the 2nd table on the left to hide herself.

“Dang!”

The bell sounded, reminding everyone to be seated.

Master Wu was even more unhappy with Xiang Shaolong, and was secretly cursing Tao Fang and Wu Yingyuan, blaming them for being late.

Close to a thousand royalty, officials and families hurriedly went to their seats, the 80 tables on both sides filled to the brim, preparing for the grandest palace feast after the feast they had when the Yan soldiers were defeated.

Everyone were just seated, and before the arrival of the King of Zhao, Xiang Shaolong arrived calmly into the hall with the wooden sword hung on his waist, accompanied by Tao Fang and Wu Yingyuan.

Everyone there had more or less heard about how he was carried out of Lady Ya’s residence this morning, and when they saw him arriving, they began sizing him up.

Besides looking a little ashen, Xiang Shaolong looks quite normal. His beautiful physique and his height, which is a little taller than Lian Jin, really makes him the dream hero of all girls.

Zhao Mu and Lian Jin, who was next to him, exchanged looks, secretly laughing that the Xiang Shaolong now only looks good on the outside, but is totally useless.

Lady Ya can't help but steal a look at him, her heart quietly crying tears of regret. She has caused him such harm, the whole city already knows about it, so how can he not know? Will he forgive her? And she can't help but hate herself for caving in under Zhao Mu's lustful force, but it's too late for regrets now. If Lian Jin goes back on his word and harms him, she can only kill herself to repay him.

Master Wu saw that his steps were still steady and was relieved. He chuckled, "Shaolong, come over!"

Xiang Shaolong hurriedly walked towards him.

Chapter 3

The duel in the Palace

Xiang Shaolong sat down next to Wu Tingfang and she hurriedly leaned over and asked with concern, "Shaolong are you all right! I am so worried, and last night you were even at that slut's place." And she pinched him hard on his thigh under the table.

Xiang Shaolong looked at the delicacies filling the table, reached his hand out and caressed her thigh and laughed quietly, "Don't worry! Just trust your future husband!"

Wu Tingfang's body went soft under his touch, and on one hand wanted him to be even bolder but on the other hand afraid that she may not be able to take it and let others see through her. She was so frightened that she hurriedly sat properly, and luckily Xiang Shaolong's 5 fingered army finally retreated.

A tall and thin gentleman with a pale face seated at the 2nd table in front turned his head around and stared at Xiang Shaolong who was seated on the 3rd table at the back row, his glance filled with the intent to create trouble.

Tao Fang who was next to Xiang Shaolong told him, "That would be the Prince of Shaoyuan, Zhao De."

Xiang Shaolong looked back at him coldly, his eyes shooting out rays of ice.

That Zhao De did not back down but stared back at him, and the warriors seated at the surrounding tables also turned back and stared at him angrily. The air was charged with explosives.

“Dang!”

The bell rung again.

The sounds of bamboo instruments are heard, a group of musicians blew on their instruments as they walked in and stood at the two sides, continuing with the music.

Only now did Prince Shaoyuan took back his stare and looked at the main door.

With the accompaniment of his concubines, King Xiaocheng of Zhao, aged around 30, walked into the hall, with over 100 followers walking behind him. Half of them went to stand around the tables, the other half following the King of Zhao towards the main seating area set aside for him.

The King of Zhao has a pale face tinged red from alcohol, his features quite handsome, his eyes bright and forehead broad, quite good looking overall. However he's just a little thin, his lips are not thick enough, and looks like a young greenhorn.

On his head he wore a headgear with a board, rounded in front and squared behind, with 10 strands of pearls stringed with red and green threads hanging from the end of the board, signifying his status as King.

His dragon robe was sewn with diagrams of the sun, moon, stars, dragons etc, looking extremely grand.

He walked alone to the main table, his concubines sat at the 3 tables behind him while the guards stood protectively at the 2 sides and the back. He really exuded the aura of the King of the state.

Everyone knelt on the floor, waiting for him to be seated.

After the King of Zhao sat down, he said gently, “Please rise and take a seat.”

After everyone called out greetings, they returned to their seats.

Naturally there are palace maids who will pour the wine for the guests.

The King of Zhao raised his cup and said, “King Xi of Yan thinks too highly of himself, and sent Li Fu and Qing Qin to attack us but were badly defeated by us. Now General Lian Po has brought troops to surround Yan under my orders. I think King Xi of Yan can forget about a good night’s sleep. Let’s drink a toast to us defeating Yan!”

Everyone cheered and the atmosphere was celebratory.

The King of Zhao suddenly stood up, and the rest were so startled they hurriedly stood up as well. He laughed, “The success of defeating Yan this time is due to the hard work of all my beloved officials. If Master Wu did not provide the warhorses and food supplies, Master Guo did not supply weapons and ships. I’m afraid we would not have succeeded. Let us all drink

a toast to both of them.”

Everyone took another drink heartily.

Master Wu and Guo Zhong were both overwhelmed and ecstatic.

Xiang Shaolong who did not have a initial good impression of him, had a change of heart and secretly thought that a person who can become the ruler, his bearing is indeed different from others.

After the King of Zhao invited everyone to be seated and enjoy the dishes, his hands clapped, emitting a crisp sound.

The musicians who had retreated to both sides of the main door immediately started playing again.

A group of nearly 200 beauties with their hair combed like a swallow's tail, wearing light veils made from translucent material danced into the hall like flying birds. The semi hidden bosoms and silken legs made various marvelous poses, capturing one's attention.

Everyone clapped and cheered, the applause was deafening.

Xiang Shaolong watched as the dancers sang and danced daintily, and can't help but think about Ting Fangshi, who was given away, and think about if he defeats Lian Jin, he will be able to get her back, and can't help but feel a gush of bravery.

Wu Tingfang whispered proudly in his ear, “Fang’er’s song and dance is a lot better than theirs. I will let you have a good look when there’s a chance.”

Xiang Shaolong replied, “But you must not wear any item of clothing.”

Wu Tingfang rolled her eyes at him, and gave him a sweet smile.

Zhao Mu and Lian Jin, who were keeping an eye on Wu Tingfang, was fuming at the scene, and were consoling themselves that Xiang Shaolong will be in trouble later.

The dancers retreated, leaving behind only their fragrance.

Everyone’s gaze shifted to the King of Zhao, holding their breath and waiting for him to speak.

The hall was huge, but it’s so quiet you can hear a pin drop.

The King of Zhao sat alone at his dragon throne, overlooking his subjects. He laughed long and loud and said, “The State of Zhao started with a military background, and we have a lot of famous generals, Zhao Shuai, Zhao Dun, Zhao Wu were our distinguished forefathers, their military exploits unparalleled at their time. After they established the country, those without military contributions cannot be appointed officials. If not for their advocating of military strength, our country would have been long gone.”

Everyone voiced their agreement.

The King of Zhao looked at them with pride, and his gaze settled on Lian Jin, and said happily, “I did not expect that such a tiny state of Wei, would actually produce an invincible swordsman.”

Lian Jin hurriedly went to his table, knelt down and bowed his head, “There is only Great Zhao in my heart now. As long as your Majesty gives a command, I am willing to lay down my life without a word.”

Master Wu secretly gave a cold snort, obviously he despised him because he defected to Zhao Mu’s side.

Maybe the King of Zhao has been influenced by Zhao Mu, his attitude towards him changed greatly and he said joyfully, “We must use the talented, as long as you’re loyal to me, I will certainly treat you well.”

Lian Jin was ecstatic and hurriedly voiced out his promise.

The King of Zhao raised his voice to ask, “Where is Xiang Shaolong?”

Xiang Shaolong gave a slight smile and answered as he walked out and knelt opposite Lian Jin. He greeted loudly, “Xiang Shaolong pays respect to my King.”

The King of Zhao’s eyes brightened, and said, “You single handedly defeated 800 horse thieves with your wits, and you’re loyal and brave. For your comrade’s sake, you risked your life to stay behind and fight the enemy. This act has brought up the fame of Great Zhao, I am very impressed with you.”

Xiang Shaolong hurriedly voiced his gratitude and modesty, but in his heart he was secretly laughing that the story is getting more and more exaggerated.

The King of Zhao smiled with satisfaction, “The two of you are the dragons among men. I want you to come into the Palace for a duel, because I want you to become our country’s role model, and spread the spirit of martial arts so that they will have the ability to kill our enemies to repay the country.”

The two of them agreed unanimously.

The King of Zhao laughed loudly and said, “I, as well as my officials, are all impatient to watch your display of legendary swordplay. But you must remember that this is just an exchange of pointers, you must not endanger each other. I will appoint the winner as imperial swordsman immediately, and he will be able to lead an army into battle.”

Zhao Mu raised his voice, “Your Majesty, I have a suggestion.”

The King of Zhao replied in surprise, “Marquis Ju Lu, please speak.”

Zhao Mu stood up and said respectfully, “If your Majesty decrees that they cannot endanger each other in this duel, they will certainly not dare to go against your orders and will control themselves in the duel. That way, it’ll be difficult for them to fully show off their sword skill, would your Majesty please reconsider.”

On hearing this, Lady Ya’s body trembled. She stood up and fluttered, “Knives

and swords are emotionless, if a life is lost, won't it turn a joyous affair into a sad one."

The King of Zhao looked at Lady Ya in bafflement and said, "Imperial Sister, Official Zhao please take a seat, I know what to do."

Zhao Mu stared coldly at her before returning to his seat. He was feeling secretly overjoyed, because Zhao Ya's reaction tells him that Xiang Shaolong was really drugged, and she is clearer about that more than anyone else.

By now everyone in the hall knows that there is something wrong with Xiang Shaolong.

The King of Zhao looked at Master Wu and asked nonchalantly, "Does Master Wu have any thoughts about this?"

Master Wu secretly thought to himself, if Xiang Shaolong lost because of women, he can only blame himself and he'll be better off dead. But if he can kill Lian Jin, he'll be able to help appease this anger he felt, and he nodded in agreement, "Shaolong once told me, he only knows how to kill, and is not well versed in performing swordplay at all. So if you want to see his real skills, we should not limit him at all."

By saying that, he's obviously means that this is going to be a duel to the death.

Lady Ya's body trembled, and finally wept over her own stupidity. Xiang Shaolong saw this, and his despise for her lessened a little.

Everyone in the hall became excited and were talking amongst themselves eagerly.

“Dang!”

It was the sound of the cup shattering, and the atmosphere was immediately serious.

After the King of Zhao threw the cup onto the ground, he said coldly, “To kill the enemy, is to use your life as a stake. The way of battles, is the way of life and death. Fine! I will not impose any restrictions, the winner will be my imperial swordsman.”

Xiang Shaolong and Lian Jin who were in front of the dragon throne agreed at the same time.

The King of Zhao cried out, “The duel begins.”

The hall was deathly quiet, silently waiting for a good show to start.

Lady Ya fell into the arms of her sister Lady An, who was next to her, unable to witness the horrific scene where Xiang Shaolong will be killed.

Wu Tingfang’s face turned pale and she leaned towards her father and asked, “He won’t lose, right!”

“Clang!”

Lian Jin pulled out his famed Golden Ray Sword and stood steadily in the middle of the hall and took a bow, a smile seemingly on his face.

Xiang Shaolong stood up, took off his robe with one hand and threw it aside, revealing the warrior's clothes specially designed for him by Shu'er and the 4 maids. The clothes made him look even more broad and heroic.

Everyone felt that Lian Jin was good looking and heroic, but on comparison, Xiang Shaolong had a little more upright and valiant air about him, making the men sigh in compliment and the women lose their hearts.

When Xiang Shaolong drew his wooden sword, everyone gasped in surprise.

He stood next to Lian Jin and bowed with the sword.

The King of Zhao asked surprisingly, "Shaolong is using the wooden sword to duel, aren't you afraid of being at a disadvantage?"

Xiang Shaolong smiled a little and replied suavely, "Your Majesty, do not worry. This wooden sword is made specially for me, it's not afraid of any swords or sharp weapons."

Lian Jin was secretly sniggering to himself, let's see how capable this empty shell can be now.

Lady Ya can't help but raise her head and took a peep at him. Looking at him standing so heroically, she felt even more guilty and collapsed into Lady An's arms again, unable to bear taking another look.

If one must find someone who is in most pain there, she must be the one.

Before Xiang Shaolong, Zhao Mu is the one who controls her heart, and ever since Zhao Gua died in the battle of Changping, Zhao Mu took the opportunity and conquered her.

Initially Zhao Mu was very taken with her mesmerizing body, but in less than a year his attention was taken by pretty men and women from other countries. These few years he treated her hot and cold, so due to loneliness and revenge, she began a wanton life hunting for men. Only when she met Xiang Shaolong, did she manage to slowly replace Zhao Mu.

This time she was tried by Zhao Mu to deal with Xiang Shaolong, on one hand because she's afraid of his control, afraid that he will harm Xiang Shaolong and spoil their good times together. But more importantly, subconsciously she is used to obeying his orders, which resulted in her silly decision and causing her much hate and regret.

After Zhao Mu snatched her from Xiang Shaolong's hand yesterday morning, he used all his ways, drugs and skilled ministrations, combined with threats and benefits. After having fun with her for more than half a day, he finally succeeded in getting her to proceed with his devious plan.

The deal is he will not hurt Xiang Shaolong, and after the duel he will help her and Xiang Shaolong get together and will never harass her again.

Now of course she has realized that Zhao Mu had lied to her.

Right at this nerve breaking point, Zhao Mu laughed and said, "Since ancient times heroes have been matched with beauties. To increase the excitement, and to make everyone in our country understand your Majesty's ideals in developing martial arts, I have another suggestion."

The King of Zhao really treats this 'lover' of his differently, and said, "Marquis Ju Lu's suggestions have always been very good, say it quickly!"

Zhao Mu's sharp eyes swept past the whole hall and said slowly, "I suggest that the winner of the duel today, will be able to choose any one of the beauties in this hall as his wife. In this way he gets both beauty and official appointment, won't it be the best thing in the world. I ask that your Majesty approve.

Everyone made a ruckus.

Xiang Shaolong can't help but secretly praise Zhao Mu for his plans. He could see through his devious plot. Obviously, if Lian Jin defeats him, he will be able to take Wu Tingfang for himself, and by then he can offer her to Zhao Mu. Zhao Mu would then get what he wants.

Master Wu's expression immediately changed. He can tell what the other's nefarious plan is, but is in a difficult position to voice opposition. Because that would imply that the winner will certainly choose his granddaughter, and indirectly mean that Wu Tingfang is the prettiest among all, the other beauties are all not qualified.

The King of Zhao was a little stunned on hearing this, and thought of Wu

Tingfang. He secretly felt that if he did not convey this order, it would tell everyone here that he is afraid of Master Wu. He was silent for a moment before raising his head heavenward and laughed, “The sword will win the beauty. This way, the palace duel tonight will be the talk for centuries to come. I will follow Marquis Ju Lu’s suggestion, the winner will be able to choose from here any lady without a betrothal to become his wife.”

Once he has spoken, this became a set deal.

Everyone’s attention returned to Xiang Shaolong and Lian Jin.

Lian Jin could not conceal the look of happiness on his face. He and Zhao Mu made a secret agreement that Zhao Mu will have Wu Tingfang for the first 3 days, and in future this beauty will belong to him. It may not be perfect, but it’s a lot better than not being able to have her at all.

Xiang Shaolong on the other hand is so calm that it borders on emotionless, having entered into the realm of calmness of the Mozi swordplay.

“Dang!”

The duel began.

Lian Jin turned towards Xiang Shaolong and struck a pose, both his feet steady on the ground, as if he’s atop a horse, his upper body leaning a little back. Under the firelight, his dazzling Golden Ray Sword pointing at Xiang Shaolong, who is 20 steps away from him. He held the pommel of the sword tightly in front of his chest, making one feel his immense strength waiting to

be unleashed.

Xiang Shaolong's eyes were lowered to the ground, his wooden sword touching the ground, like an old monk meditating. He was facing the King of Zhao, with Lian Jin at his side.

Although the two of them have not started the fight, but everyone can strongly feel the opposing calmness and movement, the atmosphere so tense that it makes breathing difficult.

Lian Jin has no idea that this calmness is the essence of the Mozi swordplay and thought that his opponent is afraid because he is weak. He laughed loudly, "Is Brother Xiang frightened!"

Lady Ya sat up straight and looked at the plaza, a dagger hidden in her sleeves. She cried out in her heart, "Xiang Lang, do not be afraid, Zhao Ya will accompany you."

Once the crowd heard Lian Jin say that, they all felt that Shaolong was afraid and talked amongst themselves busily. The King of Zhao and Master Wu looked unhappy while Zhao Mu laughed icily.

This does not mean that their eyes are not bright enough. It's just that the essence of Mozi swordplay which places more emphasis on defense rather than attack, is really vastly different from the other schools of swordplay and ideals during that era. When 2 enemies face each other, who would not use all their might to attack, hoping to strike a fatal move.

The corners of Xiang Shaolong's mouth curved up into a slight smile and he said nonchalantly, "Top grade martial arts, is not something that Brother Lian can understand, strike now! Don't let others misunderstand that Brother Lian is only someone who can talk."

Lian Jin was so furious that his eyes shot out a murderous, icy stare. He straightened his back, using the strength to propel his hand forward, the golden ray from the sword shot forward, aiming at his opponent's shoulder, his aim accurate and vicious.

Zhao Mu and Prince Shaoyuan's tables erupted in thunderous cheers.

Xiang Shaolong was calm, not at all affected by the cheers of his opponent's supporters.

He knows that once he strikes, it'll be difficult for him to pretend to be tired and weak, then he'll certainly be defeated by Lian Jin whose sword skills is as good as his. But he can lure Lian Jin in using strategies.

Lian Jin will take advantage of the fact that he's weak, so he will certainly use all his might to attack once he moves. Besides, Lian Jin has deep hatred for him, and wants to further weaken him, so he will surely not give any leeway in his attack. He will use all his strength in all his moves, and in that way, he will fall into his trap.

Comparing their stamina, how can Lian Jin be better than him who has gone through the strictest stamina training.

So when Lian Jin thinks that he is exhausting his energy, the truth is contrary, it is Lian Jin himself who will be exhausting his own energy.

Besides, his advantage is that his wooden sword is 3 to 4 times heavier, so if Lian Jin wants to fight head on, he'll be at a disadvantage.

The sword's ray has reached him, aiming towards his left rib.

Without a word, Xiang Shaolong took a diagonal step back towards the right, the heavy wooden sword left the ground and came up diagonally, and struck right at the tip of the Golden Ray sword, which is exactly the weakest point of his opponent's sword.

The Golden Ray sword could not withstand this and was immediately bounced away.

This time it is the rest of the people who cheered, the loudest of course being those from the Wu family. Wu Ting Fang's palms were almost swollen from the clapping.

Even Lian Jin did not expect his opponent's swordplay would be better than when they fought the last time, and was afraid he'll take the opportunity to press on an attack. He lifted his sword back into the defend position, and was about to strike again when his opponent turned to face him, his heavy wooden sword retracted a little, as if he's getting ready to attack. He was so shocked that he took a step back.

Right at this time, the sword Xiang Shaolong was holding lightly trembled,

and dropped a little, revealing a superficial loophole.

Lian Jin was ecstatic, thinking to himself that this lad is already showing fatigue at the second strike, so he hesitated no further. With a ‘swoosh’, he lifted his sword for a direct slash, as if he wanted to slash his opponent’s wooden sword. When his shoulder is almost parallel, his body dashed forward, his wrist flicked and the slash changed into a stab, aiming right at his opponent’s face. At the same time he gave a flying kick towards his opponent’s wooden sword, the moves aimed at killing his enemy with one stroke.

His movements were fluid like a swimming dragon, forming a coherent whole with a murderous intent. Everyone was dumbfounded and started getting worried for Xiang Shaolong.

Lady Ya secretly exclaimed to herself ‘forget it’, and while those people next to her were concentrating fully on the duel, she pressed the dagger against her belly.

Xiang Shaolong looked icily at the Golden Ray sword that was coming to him like a poisonous dragon and moved swiftly to the side. With a backhand move of his wooden sword, it hit square and hard on the Golden Ray sword.

“Clang” and the Goldne Ray sword was propelled away again.

The crowd was intoxicated and cheered loudly.

Although Lian Jin’s wrist was numb from the impact, but because Xiang

Shaolong used only 50% of his strength, Lian Jin thought that he is just using his remaining strength, coupled with the excellent swordplay and the heavy weight of the wooden sword to block his Golden Ray sword. He laughed loud and long, and struck 10 times, each attack aimed to force the opponent into fighting head on with him.

Xiang Shaolong was secretly laughing, his opponent is giving up the intricacies of the swordplay, and his using his disadvantage to attack to his advantage. Therefore he retreated as he fought, with no loopholes in his defense at all. Either slashing or stabbing, he'd always managed to neutralize Lian Jin's vigorous attacks at the last moment.

On the surface, Lian Jin has gained the upper hand, forcing Xiang Shaolong to keep on retreating without a chance to retaliate at all. But only Lian Jin will know the difficulty, although his opponent seems to be in a dangerous position, but he can never seem to fully break past his last defense.

Why is it that after last night's depletion of his energy, he is still so formidable.

The crowd has never seen such startling swordplay and were cheering madly.

The King of Zhao was excited as well and kept on clapping and cheering.

Zhao Mu had thought that Lian Jin could have a swift victory, and now he was furrowing his brows. He took a glance at Lady Ya and saw her piteous look, which put his mind at ease a little.

Prince Shaoyuan shouted the most fiercely, he wished that Lian Jin would cut off Xiang Shaolong's head with one slash.

Xiang Shaolong took another 3 steps back and laughed loudly before standing steady. The heavy wooden sword slashed across with all his might, but just before it hit against the Golden Ray sword, the stance changed twice, forcing the now tired Lian Jin to change his moves twice before he can block the heavy wooden sword.

"Dang!" The sound this time actually sounded like the crisp clanging of 2 metal swords hitting against one another.

Lian Jin was stunned and realized that his opponent's strength has increased by at least half and although he did not want to, he can't help but take 2 steps back, changing his attack into defense. His relentless attacks finally came to an end.

Xiang Shaolong stared at him, electricity shooting out from his eyes, and he seems to be a totally changed person. He straightened his back, revealing a heroic air and said icily, "You've been tricked!"

He took half a step forward, roared and raised his sword to slash at his opponent's face. The wind carried his roar, piercing to the ears, and even more astonishing, this slash seems to carry with it the fatality of a thousand soldiers and horses charging into the battlefield.

The endless cheers and roars came to an abrupt stop.

This change is too unexpected.

Many stood up unconsciously, and Zhao Mu is one of them.

Lady Ya stood up with a surprised ‘Ah’, the dagger in her hand dropped to the ground, a look of happiness as she gazed at her godly and heroic lover.

When Lian Jin heard his opponent said “You’ve been tricked”, he was so frightened his senses took leave of him. But he is after all a skilled pugilist, and used all his capability and strength to forcefully meet with this unavoidable attack.

Lian Jin’s stamina was not as good as Xiang Shaolong’s in the first place, and coupled with the fact that he’s fought for a long time and losing strength. His opponent’s wooden sword was almost a hundred catties, so Xiang Shaolong’s attack forced him to retreat 3 steps back.

A thunderous applause erupted from the crowd at this time.

There was no expression in Xiang Shaolong’s eyes at all, he was as calm as still water. The heavy wooden sword on his shoulder, he walked towards Lian Jin step by step. The ‘pak pak’ sound made by his footsteps, became the symphony of death.

His formidable imposing manner pressed further, not allowing Lian Jin any time to catch his breath at all.

Lian Jin knows that he must not let his opponent take control of the situation,

so he roared and the Golden Ray sword became a shining blur, turning from a wide attacking stance back into the more intricate swordplay he is more adept at.

Xiang Shaolong's heavy wooden sword sprung up from his shoulder and was in midair as he said icily, "It's too late!"

The heavy wooden sword increased its speed. It looked like a clumsy move but in fact it was an intricate one, slashing heavily right in the middle of the shining, blurred sword.

The blur of the sword stopped, Lian Jin took a few steps back, fresh blood oozing from the corner of his mouth.

Xiang Shaolong knows that if he wants revenge, this is the time. He quietly called out Shu'er and Su Nu's names in his heart and charged forward, knocking into Lian Jin together with his sword.

The two bodies joined together and separated again.

Everything was quiet, it was as if time has been frozen at that instant.

The whole hall was so quiet that one can hear a pin drop. Besides Zhao Mu and a few other highly skilled pugilists with excellent eyesight, the rest can't really see clearly what has happened.

The two of them exchanged positions, then separated by one step, and stood back to back.

Xiang Shaolong raised his head upwards, the wooden sword back on his shoulder, his eyes filled with endless sadness and anger.

Lian Jin looked totally dumbfounded and lowered his head to look at his chest where the sword struck. He felt the broken ribs and the gradually spreading heart wrecking pain.

Everyone was flabbergasted, looking at the two quietly standing person in the hall.

Lian Jin groaned, and he knelt down.

Xiang Shaolong looked heavenward and laughed loud and long. He knelt down towards the King of Zhao, the tip of his sword on the ground and said respectfully, "It's my good fortune that I have not lost my life, and I would like to marry the young lady of the Wu family, Tingfang as my wife." His words were deliberately spoken for Lian Jin's ears.

On hearing this, Lian Jin felt a rush of anger attacking his heart, spurted out a mouthful of fresh blood and collapsed on the ground. His stance was like he was kow-towing in prayer, and died on the spot.

Zhao Mu lost everything in this bet and was so furious his face turned pale. His fists clenched tightly, he looked at Lady Ya with hatred.

Lady Ya's pretty face revealed an alluring exhilaration, her dainty body trembling. She had just turned her head back and took a look at him, the corners of her mouth revealing a disdainful expression.

Zhao Mu suddenly knows that Lady Ya is now fully out of his control.

Everyone in the Wu family was excited.

Wu Tingfang's hands clasped her pretty face, tears of love rolling down her cheeks uncontrollably. Heavens! She will be his little wife.

The rest of the people in the hall have not recollected their emotions after witnessing the engaging duel earlier and were still looking on speechlessly. The only sound they can hear is the remaining echoes of Xiang Shaolong's words.

The King of Zhao personally poured a cup of wine and left his seat to walk towards Xiang Shaolong and said with a sigh, "Such swordsmanship has truly never been seen before. From today onwards, not only will Shaolong be Wu Tingfang's husband, but you'll also be Great Zhao's Chief Imperial Officer. I will bestow you a cup of excellent wine."

Xiang Shaolong put his wooden sword down and after kowtowing and thanking his Majesty, he received the wine while still kneeling and drank it in one gulp.

Thunderous cheers erupted.

No one is interested to throw even a glance at Lian Jin's body.

Chapter 4

Regaining what was lost

That night the Wu's castle was decorated festively, everyone was in a celebratory mood, making merry with songs and dances.

The only dejected person is Wu Hei. After Master Wu gave him a thorough scolding, he chased him out of the house. All his men will be transferred to Tao Fang who gained great merit by recommending Xiang Shaolong.

In the mansion, Master Wu's wife and his favored concubines, 17 sons and their families all attended the celebratory feast. On top of that there were his 20 odd daughters and their husband's families, together with other relatives, there were over a thousand people gathered in the hall, the atmosphere festive.

The ecstatic Wu Tingfang dragged her husband and after seeing her Mother, she dragged and introduced him to relatives and friends, causing Xiang Shaolong much confusion and headache. Like what Tao Fang said, besides Wu Yingyuan, the rest are unable to account to much accomplishment, only interested in merry-making.

Amidst the talking and laughter, Tao Fang came over to call him aside. They came to a small study at the back courtyard. Master Wu and Wu Yingyuan are already waiting there.

The four of them sat down on the mat facing one another.

Master Wu clapped his shoulder and said, "Yingyuan told me what happened. Shaolong, not only are your sword skill unparalleled, but you're wittier than others, or else the situation now will be totally opposite."

Xiang Shaolong heard that his tone is warm, apparently he is already regarding him as his grandson-in-law, so he hurriedly expressed his gratitude.

A fog came over Master Wu's expression and he said somberly, "Yingyuan told me that you have the blood of Qin in you. If it was in the past, I will certainly be very unhappy, but today I feel exceptionally close to you."

He continued emotionally, "No matter how much effort I have put in for Zhao, the Zhaos will still treat me with suspicion. What happened to Lian Jin this time is proof of that."

He took a glance at everyone and sighed, "To think that years ago before Wei's Shang Yang went to Qin, the Qins have not discarded vulgarity. Fathers, sons, brothers and aunts, daughters all slept in the same room. It's all due to Shang Yang's reforms that made Qin leap into one of the strongest states. But look how a foreigner like him ended up. Once King Xiao passed away, his successor immediately had him killed by having 5 ox dismember his body. Ha! Now I am starting to believe what Yingyuan has said, sooner or later we will face the same fate."

Tao Fang added, "Luckily Shaolong is now up and coming, and can dispel this disadvantageous position of ours for the time being."

Wu Yingyuan replied, “I’m afraid Zhao Mu will come up with another plan now that this one has failed. He will surely find a way to harm Shaolong, and we must not let our guards down against Prince Shaoyuan as well.”

Master Wu gave a cold snort, “What they want is the Wu family’s riches and women. Humph! I am not one who will offer my neck to be chopped. Now that the Zhaos have revealed that they are going to deal with me, and with that Guo Zhong at the side fanning the fire, we must now plan for a rainy day so that we will not be caught off guard when the time comes.”

Wu Yingyuan replied, “Father do not worry! With Shaolong, it’s like adding a tiger to our strength, the Zhaos will not dare to make any hasty moves. Besides for the past 10 years, I have always used the advantage of being able to travel outside to plan for our future. Now that I have some headway, I will be able to present to you the whole plan very soon for your consideration.”

After Master Wu complimented his son, he turned towards Shaolong and said, “Today is your big day, we’ll find a good date within these few days and let you and Fang’er marry immediately. You can put your mind at ease and relax and enjoy yourself, the other matters can be put aside first.”

He added with a smile, “Now Tao Fang will take you to see someone, that is the reward you deserve.”

Xiang Shaolong was ecstatic and hurriedly thanked him.

Tao Fang walked with him towards the courtyard behind the castle and said emotionally, “If I have not met you, the one being chased away today would

not have been Wu Hei, but me, Tao Fang.”

Xiang Shaolong replied, “Is Master Tao really a Zhao, why would the Wu father and son trust you so much?”

Tao Fang replied, “Actually I’m not really sure who I am as well. If not for the previous generation’s master who took me in, I’m afraid I would have starved to death on the streets. Therefore even if I have to lay down my life for the Wu family, I will not have a word of complaint.”

Xiang Shaolong was astounded.

By now the two of them has reached a bungalow built with its back to the hills, and they could see lights inside.

Tao Fang said, “From tonight onwards, this house would be your home. After Grand Young Miss become yours, she will move here as well.”

Xiang Shaolong saw that this house is surrounded by woods, and is very happy with it.

Tao Fang pushed him towards the front courtyard and laughed, “Enjoy yourself! But if Grand Young Miss comes looking for you, even Master would not be able to hold her back.” He left after saying these words.

Xiang Shaolong stepped on the gravel and he has not even reached the main door when Chunying, Xiaying, Qiuying and Dongying, the 4 pretty maids came out together and knelt at the 2 sides, saying together, “We pay our

respects to Master."

Xiang Shaolong was ecstatic and he reached out his hands and pinched each of their faces, but suddenly he thought of the ill-fated Shu'er and Su Nu.

Now that Lian Jin has died under his sword, only that Prince Shaoyuan and Zhao Mu remains.

The 4 maids were understanding, and on seeing his distraught expression, they wept together with him as well.

Xiang Shaolong forced himself to look happy and cajoled the 4 maids. Once he stepped into the house, he saw that the decorations were exquisite, warm and comfortable.

Xiaying is the most petite among them, about 16 to 17 years old, and she's the prettiest as well. She came up to him and whispered in his ear, "There's someone waiting for Master in the room."

Xiang Shaolong felt heat rising up his heart, reached out his hand and grabbed her bosom before walking towards the room.

He had just pushed the door open when a fiery ball ran into his arms, the dainty body trembling, with tears of joy flowing down. Who else can it be but the long gone Ting Fangshi.

The old flame of desire started burning high.

Words were replaced but hot and wet kisses. This couple who had missed each other for so long caressed each other madly, removing the obstacles of clothing who has no place being there for each other.

Under the light of the burning lamp, they used the most vigorous movements to express the love they felt for each other, joined together as one in the most intimate way possible between a man and a woman.

In this moment, every inch of their skin belongs to the other, there is no holding back at all.

The sexy and alluring Ting Fangshi totally opened up her beautiful body, accepting her lover's most violent and intoxicating attacks.

The joy took her soul to the peak of happiness, her soul was besotted, she screamed madly, using her body and mind to make this man, who has caused her endless tears for the last 6 months, happy.

She has now received her reward.

While at the peak of her joy, this mature and voluptuous beauty's convulsed, and uncontrollably twined herself around Xiang Shaolong's perfect male body like an octopus, using all the strength in her limbs to hold on to him tightly.

Xiang Shaolong lied comfortably on her body, licking the tears on her face and asked, "Where have you been all these time?"

With her face still blushing, Ting Fangshi panted, “Right here, but not in this pretty house.”

Xiang Shaolong asked in surprise, “Didn’t Tao Fang said you’ve been given away?”

As long as Ting Fangshi can hug him, she can forget about what happened in the past. She said, “Do not blame Master Tao, he has been protecting me all along. Ever since we thought the horse thieves killed you, Master made me into a dance courtesan. But because of Master Tao, I’ve always received special treatment and I do not have to accompany guests. Then you came back alive, and even defeated the bad person, I was so excited I could die.”

Xiang Shaolong laughed, “This I know too well.”

Ting Fangshi wriggled coquettishly.

Xiang Shaolong felt his desire burning again, and was about to launch another attack when Qiuying’s voice could be heard calling from outside, “Master! Grand Young Miss is here.”

Xiang Shaolong kissed Ting Fangshi and said, “Have some sleep first, I’ll be right back.”

Ting Fangshi nodded her head like a little lamb. Xiang Shaolong can’t help but grope her a little more before walking out of the room satisfied, and bumped right into Wu Tingfang who was walking over.

Wu Tingfang hugged him and stretched her head to look into the naked splendor in the room and laughed, "Have you just done your naughty deed?"

Xiang Shaolong laughed, "That's right! But it's not the end yet." He bent over and carried her up and went back into the room.

Ting Fangshi was so startled she hurriedly knelt down and paid her respects.

Wu Tingfang's slender hands twined around Xiang Shaolong's neck and she looked at the naked Ting Fangshi and half sighed, "Dispense with courtesy. Our husband is the rudest person in this world, so we can forget about any semblance of courtesy."

It was followed by joyous mating, endless loving.

The next day, before the sun rose, Tao Fang came and woke him up to go to the Palace immediately to see the King of Zhao and accept his new appointment.

Although Wu Tingfang and Ting Fangshi woke up with him, but after last night, their bodies doesn't seem to obey their wishes and they couldn't get out of bed.

Xiang Shaolong was secretly cursing that even in this era with no alarm clocks, he still has to suffer the pain of waking up early. The 4 maids hurriedly helped him freshen up and change before he went on his way with Tao Fang.

Ever since they reached Handan, this is the first time he woke up so early. It

turns out that there's a lot of people who wakes up even earlier than them. Besides the farmers and herdsmen heading towards the market, they also saw troops of Zhao soldiers on their morning exercise, walking briskly and neatly past them as they shouted commands. All these activities added some excitement to this morning city.

Tao Fang rode in with him, his eyes tired and said, "I had a little too much to drink last night, and had some fun with 2 dance courtesans. I'm still having a bit of a headache now. I have to admit old age even if I didn't want to, in the past I can have 7 girls in a row and I won't feel anything."

Xiang Shaolong exclaimed hoarsely, "7?" and thought to himself that either his memory is failing him, or he's boasting. He only had 2 girls last night and now his back still feels a little stiff. If it's 7 women, he might even have problem getting up the horse now.

When men talks about such matters, none will want to belittle themselves. Tao Fang said quietly, "If you don't believe me you can ask Eldest Young Master, he was in the room next to mine that night and said that he could hear their moans all night. Ha! If only there's a pill to return one to one's youth."

Xiang Shaolong secretly thought, do I really have to ask my Father-in-law, is it true that on a certain date on a certain night, Master Tao was in a room next to you doing it with 7 women and making them scream the whole night? He can't help but smile at this thought.

By now the two of them has passed through Lady Ya's enormous residence

and turned into the main road in Handan, going towards the Palace. The sky is slowly getting brighter.

Tao Fang saw Lady Ya's residence and said, "I thought Zhao Ya would come and look for you last night, but I didn't expect my guess to be wrong."

Xiang Shaolong also felt a little lost. Because he thought as well that Zhao Ya will not let him off last night, then he will be able to humiliate her so as to appease his anger at her for obeying Zhao Mu. But things did not happen to his expectations and now he is past his anger. He thought of how she opposed without concern about herself, Zhao Mu's suggestion last night about having no restrictions in the duel. Obviously she loves him more than Zhao Mu, and he can't help but miss her a little.

When they went past the city gates, all the guards saluted Xiang Shaolong, making him feel what his status is like now, and at the same time he thought that if he has to start work so early everyday in future, he would have to give up all merry-making at night.

When the two of them came to the plaza outside Chaoyang Hall where the King of Zhao meets his officials, they saw the steps outside the hall was filled with officials and generals in their official robes, chatting amongst themselves in small groups. The atmosphere was serious with an underlying ease.

Zhao Mu was talking to a few generals when he saw the two of them walking over. After greeting one another, Zhao Mu looked as if nothing has happened and said warmly, "Master Tao please return, you can hand Shaolong over to

me, I will settle everything for him.”

After Tao Fang cast a look at Xiang Shaolong, he left helplessly.

Xiang Shaolong wished that he could cut him up into pieces immediately, but he has to pretend to smile and look respectful.

Zhao Mu said with a smile, “It’s the first time Shaolong is reporting here, you’re surely not used to the rules in the Palace. But now that you’re one of us, I will look after you.”

Xiang Shaolong secretly cursed him for being a wily old fox. He placed his bet on the wrong person earlier so now he’s trying to get into his good books. He has no choice but to pretend and reply gratefully, “Thank you Marquis for thinking so highly of me, I am indeed very grateful to you. If not for Marquis’ suggestion, how else will the Wu family agree to marry their daughter to me.”

Although it felt as if an arrow was struck through his heart, Zhao Mu doesn’t know that in fact Xiang Shaolong has heard about his evil intentions towards Wu Tingfang in the carriage that night. He thought that he was genuinely grateful and hurriedly replied, “You’re welcome.”

By then the bell was sounded and the officials hurriedly walked into the hall.

Zhao Mu asked warmly, “Does Shaolong has anything special on tonight?”

Xiang Shaolong secretly sighed to himself, knowing that there’s no way he

can reject, but also because of the strategy he had discussed with the Wu family last night, he can only reply, "Marquis please give your instructions, I can cast everything else aside."

Zhao Mu was very satisfied, thinking to himself, you threw your lot with the Wu Family with the intention of only getting power and beauty. As long as I devise a ploy and let you know who is the real master, you'll come and work for me obediently. He laughed and said, "I'll send someone at dusk to Wu's residence to escort you to my residence for dinner. You don't have to be dressed formally, just take it that you're just going home."

Amidst the loud laughter, he accompanied Xiang Shaolong into the hall.

This Zhao Mu is a strong handed and ambitious man, so he has the intention of pulling a rare talent man like Xiang Shaolong to his side. He also wants to cast a blow to the Wu family, so he put aside his private grudges for the time being and changed to soft tactics to deal with Xiang Shaolong. But he did not expect Xiang Shaolong will be one who place relationships and loyalty above everything else.

Shu'er's death has made the enmity between them unbreakable, only blood will be able to wash it clean.

The officials in the hall took their places on the left and right rows according to their status. Xiang Shaolong stood outside at the door of the hall, until the King of Zhao took his seat on the imperial throne and settled a few court affairs before he broke tradition and summoned him to court to officially appoint him. Only then did he order the internal official to bring him to the

imperial palace's uniform department to take his measurements for his official robes and for professionals to teach him about his duties and court etiquette.

That internal official is called Ji Guang, and panders to him extremely, taking the effort to explain everything in detail. Only now did Xiang Shaolong realize that the imperial guard is one of the 10 assistants under the command of the Brocade Commander, their only duty is to ensure his Majesty's safety. They have to be on duty in the Palace for 5 days every month, sticking close to the King to protect him. He was secretly lamenting that in the past he was frequently tasked with protecting politically important people, and now that he's in this world 2000 years earlier, he's still doing the same job.

The short and fat Ji Guang smiled and said, "You don't know how much his Majesty likes you. He gave you 3 days' leave, by then your official robes will be ready. You'll surely look suave in your army uniform, no one will look better than you."

Xiang Shaolong looked at his flat and round face that looks so funny and said, "Can I leave now?"

A look of alarm flashed past Ji Guang's face, and he said with a smile, "There's still one more place to go, please come with me."

They turned this way and that in the Palace, passing through corridors and gardens, and in the end reached an exquisite little house in the back palace. He said mysteriously, "Please go in, I will wait here."

Xiang Shaolong was baffled, but looking at his expression, he knows that there's no use asking him, so he might as well walked towards that building.

He had just stepped into the hall when a beauty who was standing next to the window turned around. It is Lady Ya, whom he was just thinking of this morning.

She has totally recovered her glowing appearance and poise, dressed all in white, proud and confident. She came towards him smiling, her rosy lips muttering quietly, "Xiang Shaolong! Xiang Shaolong!"

Xiang Shaolong saw her smiling so prettily, and was unable to utter even a word of reprimand. He can only walk past her coldly, going towards where she stood earlier, looking at the woods outside the window with a small stream with a bridge over it. The scenery was enchanting.

Lady Ya swayed her way next to him and said gently, "Xiang Shaolong! Shall we make a deal?"

This strange move threw Xiang Shaolong off guard, and he looked at her in shock.

Lady Ya covered her mouth and laughed. She lowered her head and said slowly, "Firstly, Zhao Ya seeks your forgiveness for falling into that villain Zhao Mu's plot and almost caused harm to you. And also caused harm to myself."

Xiang Shaolong knows that she must have thought back about the matter

and knows that he did not take that aphrodisiac, so she told him the truth first to show that she dare not hide anything from him.

Lady Ya lifted her head, her rosy lips saying quietly, “Zhao Ya wants to thank you as well. If you have not appeared, I may never be able to leave Zhao Mu’s control, but ever since last night, the thought of him makes me sick. From now on, I will not allow him to touch even a finger of mine.” She added, “And I won’t let any man touch me. Of course, the only exception is Xiang Shaolong, he can touch any way he wants.”

Xiang Shaolong felt a lurch in his heart and almost pulled this woman whose beauty is comparable to Wu Tingfang’s into his arms and let his hands enjoy themselves. However he gritted his teeth and held himself back, saying calmly, “Lady has not disclosed the terms of your deal.”

The sunlight and the shadow from the trees fell on her snow-white clothes from outside the window, which made her look as if she is wearing a robe of crisp morning ray. Her heaving bosom, her delicate and well defined shoulders, her tiny waist, her long and beautiful legs, she is so alluring that Xiang Shaolong is unable to put her together with the word ‘s.lut’. But she was once a s.lut. Such strange oxymoron, made her especially enchanting.

Naturally Lady Ya knows this point, so she’s quite confident that Xiang Shaolong will accept her surrender. He raised her dainty brows slightly and said quietly, “I know you’re deliberately trying to scare me. In actual fact you’re no longer angry with me, but just pretending to.”

Xiang Shaolong couldn’t do anything to her so he sighed, reached out his

hand to grab her waist and pull her in. His face 2 inches away from hers, he asked, “You really will not touch any other men in future?”

Lady Ya threw a glance at him, “of course it’s true, if you don’t believe me you can take my heart out for a look!”

Xiang Shaolong is flirtatious by nature, the more wanton the woman, the more exciting it is for him. Therefore how can he ever resist the temptress Lady Ya’s attacks. He sighed and said, “Although I had a crazy night with Wu Tingfang last night, but you’ve still managed to set me aflame, and I only wish to see the most exciting part of your deal.”

Lady Ya smiled coquettishly, “That part belongs to you long ago, now Zhao Ya is only asking that you accept it from the kindness of your heart. What I am giving is Lady Ya’s effective ears, to be your spy and scout.”

Xiang Shaolong was astounded, “Are you trying to hint to me that I will be in great danger?”

Lady Ya used all her strength to hug him, gave him s short, gentle kiss and sighed, “How can one mountain contain 2 tigers, this is such a simple logic. One day you will ultimately clash face to face with Zhao Mu. With such a useful soldier like Zhao Ya around, how can Shaolong not accept it with a smile.”

Xiang Shaolong exclaimed hoarsely, “So once Zhao Ya escapes from Zhao Mu’s grasp, she can become so formidable. I shall decide to make do with it and accept this main deal of yours.”

Lady Ya was ecstatic, “Remember it’s main and not side, once we leave Handan I want to become one of your main wives.”

Xiang Shaolong asked in surprise, “Leave Handan?”

Lady Ya left him, looked out the window sadly and nodded her head, “That is the only way out for us, or else in less than a year, you and everyone in the Wu family will die.”

Xiang Shaolong was shaken and grabbed her shoulders, pulling her close into his arms and asked gently, “Zhao Ya can you be more precise about this?” He was finally moved by Zhao Ya, because she would even betray the Kingdom of Zhao and her family for him, her love for him is boundless. So he changed his way of addressing her as well.

Lady Ya spoke with love, “As long as you will love me for the rest of your live, Ya’er will listen to anything you say.”

Xiang Shaolong looked at her heaving bosom as she spoke, and knows that her heart is now burning with desire. He sighed and said, “Ya’er’s bosom looks so beautiful when you’re breathing.”

Once Lady Ya heard her lover complimenting her in her chest, she turned around happily, “Continue with your compliments! Ya’er loves being pampered by Xiang Lang.”

Xiang Shaolong was secretly thinking that she’s formidable, and really wanted to have fun with her immediately, but this is definitely not the right

place. He pulled her and ask, “Your place or mine?”

Lady Ya hugged him tightly and sighed, “Hai! Ya’er wants it even more than you! But important matters are at hand, you and the Wu family are in a life and death situation.”

It was as if cold water was poured over his head, Xiang Shaolong’s desire evaporated completely and he looked at her seriously.

Lady Ya fell into his arms and whispered into his ears, “When Zhao Mu took me back to his residence yesterday to have fun with, I took the chance while he was sleeping to steal a look at his secret documents which he kept locked up. I found a name list, and they’re all from the Wu family. The document listed when those people on the list accepted pay, and when they provided information and details like those. I have memorized and written these people’s name earlier, and I’ve put it inside your clothes now.”

Xiang Shaolong was stunned, “You know how to open locks?”

Lady Ya replied, “I’ve received training on theft and spying since I was young, and because of my status and my body, Ya’er has frequently been sent overseas to gather information. Besides my Imperial Brother and Zhao Mu, no one knows about this. Now that I’ve told you everything, you should know how my heart feels!”

Xiang Shaolong kissed her and said, “I, Xiang Shaolong’s words are as good as gold, I will not let you down.” Only now did he understand why the King of Zhao favors her so much, and he also thought of another question, “Now that

everyone knows that you have fallen in love with me, won't they be suspicious of you?"

Lady Ya replied, "Don't worry! They're so sure that I will not be infatuated with any man for long, and that I'm a born slut. Besides, my family name is Zhao as well, why would I help an outsider deal with my own blood family?"

Xiang Shaolong can't help but ask, "Can you really harden your heart to deal with your family?"

Lady Ya replied sadly, "I have totally lost hope in the Zhao family. Not only are they biased against anyone who is not from Zhao, they are also biased against those Zhaos with other family names. This is the reason the totally incapable Zhao Gua can replace the great general Lian Po, which resulted in the great tragedy of Changping, causing the state of Zhao to weaken. Now I only wish to go far away with you, and not end up being the slave of a country doomed to end, and end up being a cheap prostitute."

Xiang Shaolong nodded his head in understanding, finally knowing why ever since her husband Zhao Gua died, she spent her life in such a intoxicated mess. It's because she has given up hope on the future, so she's numbing herself with her wanton lifestyle.

Lady Ya's voice turned quiet and she said quickly and impatiently, "Wu Yingyuan's activities overseas, my Imperial Brother has heard about it long ago and he even suspects that he is in touch with the Qins. It's just that Master Wu controls almost half of our state's livestock and is very reputable in Zhao, with an army of thousands of warriors, my Imperial Brother dare not

make any rash moves, afraid that he will rock the stability and invite other states to take the opportunity to attack!”

Xiang Shaolong felt his skin go numb, so it turns out that the King of Zhao really intends to get rid of the Wu family.

Lady Ya said, “Last night after you defeated Lian Jin, Imperial Brother and Zhao Mu held a secret discussion and they decided to pull you to their side and make use of you to deal with the Wu family. Later Imperial Brother summoned me and wants me to use my beauty to charm you so that you cannot pull yourself away. But Ya'er knows about my own feelings, the one who got charmed instead is Ya'er!”

Xiang Shaolong remembered his appointment with Zhao Mu tonight and felt a cold shiver. He did not expect that the King of Zhao would be involved in the background as well.

Lady Ya said, “You can still drag for time now, because Zhao Mu’s men will go to Mulberry Village these 2 days to find out your background. Only when they’re sure you have no problem will they use you.”

Xiang Shaolong really felt his whole body turn cold. If they capture Mei Canniang, that’ll be terrible.

Lady Ya kissed him gently as she said, “Ya'er knows that not only is your swordplay unparalleled, but your wits is even greater. Now that I have given my life to you, we will share wealth and woes together, you must not abandon Ya'er!”

Xiang Shaolong hugged her tightly and said quietly, “Now let us put on a show, pretend that we’ve just had some fun, understand?”

Lady Ya’s pretty face blushed and nodded her head in agreement.

Xiang Shaolong moved immediately, using his hands and mouth and messed up her clothes and hair before leaving in a hurry.

Chapter 5

Scheming Snake

The name list was on the table. Master Wu, Wu Yingyuan and Tao Fang all looked somber. Surprising there was also Lian Jin, Li Shan and Wu Hei's names on it as well. Besides Tao Fang, Li Shan is the closest to Xiang Shaolong among all the warriors, but who would have expected that he is the King of Zhao's spy.

No wonder Prince Shaoyuan came asking for Su Nu at such a perfect timing, because it's all a plot. Xiang Shaolong feels the pain of betrayal by a good friend.

Master Wu said quietly, "Although Zhao Ya is highly trustworthy, but we must still try various methods to check if this name list is authentic. Yingyuan will be in charge of this."

He then told Tao Fang, "You'll send men to rush to Mulberry Village immediately and move Mei Canniang to a secret location. Then you'll bribe the people there heavily and ask them to lie for Shaolong, to cover this secret that Shaolong is a descendant of a Qin."

Only Shaolong knows his own problem, because no one there knows him at all. Therefore he can only force himself to say, "I've always hunted and stayed in the mountains, and only went to Mulberry Village recently. I've always stayed at an isolated valley..."

Tao Fang patted his own chest and said, “That’s no problem, I’ll get some people to disguise themselves as villagers. I guarantee that no one will know.” Xiang Shaolong felt assured.

Master Wu sighed, “It’s all thanks to Shaolong this time that we find out how dire our circumstances are now. If not for Shaolong’s victory last night, if Lian Jin marries Fang’er then it’ll be terrible. From now on, I will not look upon myself as a Zhao. Luckily we have connections with the rich and powerful in various other states, we’ll have people accepting us no matter where we run to. The problem is how can we avoid the Zhaos coming after us?” Xiang Shaolong was feeling perplexed, why is it that Master Wu seems very confident of moving the entire clan out of the city?

Master Wu showed his calmness in the face of danger and said coldly, “It’s now time to settle the accounts for autumn. I’ll take the opportunity to arrange everything when the herdsmen in charge from the various places comes and prepare to react to the situation. Since he’s unkind to me, I shall not show him any mercy either. Since King Xiaocheng wants to deal with me, I’ll drag him down at the same time.”

Wu Yingyuan added, “Keeping soldiers for a thousand days, so that they can be used for a time. Now it seems like an critical time for Zhao Wuzhuo and the death warriors he trained.” Master Wu agreed heartily. This King of Livestock who has always been loyal to the state of Zhao is really furious now.

Tao Fang explained to Xiang Shaolong, “Zhao Wuzhuo is Master’s godson, and he goes around especially to adopt orphans and give them rigorous

training to become our main force. We have a few thousand people and they're usually scattered around the pastures near Handan. Only the few of us know about this matter."

Wu Yingyuan said, "With them helping Shaolong, it'll be even better. Even if the King of Zhao send his troops to attack our Wu's castle, we can still defend ourselves for about half a month."

Master Wu said, "We'll postpone Shaolong and Fang'er's wedding to a month later, then on the pretext that we're preparing for the wedding, we can cover up a lot of our movements." Tao Fang added, "I can use the excuse that I'm reorganizing Wu Hei's men to make changes to the troops and transfer most of the spies out of here so that the Zhaos will not be suspicious."

Master Wu said with determination, "We'll do it that way then." He turned towards Xiang Shaolong and said, "Shaolong has to pretend to be attracted by benefits and lust, and accept Zhao Mu's bribes. You must also pretend to be enamored with Zhao Ya's beauty so that the Zhao people will not get suspicious. I will give you some information to leak to Zhao Mu so that they will trust you even more." Xiang Shaolong agreed sincerely.

Master Wu reached out and grabbed his shoulders and said with a smile, "Go and see Fang'er! She came over just now asking for you." Xiang Shaolong wanted to smile back, but he has lost the mood for it.

In the 21st century, when he leave his home everyday, he seldom thought of whether he can return home alive. But in this warring states period, not only does he have to worry about not coming home, he has to worry about

disasters falling from the sky and affecting the whole clan. For survival, everyone must make himself become the stronger one, or rely on the stronger ones to survive.

Xiang Shaolong found Wu Tingfang who was practicing her horse riding and archery skills at the training field. After practicing with her a round of archery, he returned to his peaceful home and saw that there is a wooden sign hung outside the door that says "Hidden Dragon Abode". It turns out to be Wu Tingfang's work.

Ting Fangshi and the 4 maids were happily pruning the bushes and flowers, humming a song and on seeing his return, she was ecstatic. She hugged him and Wu Tingfang and took them into the house. Before they could sit down properly, a huge group of servants carrying a hundred odd large and small chests came over. Xiang Shaolong was dumbfounded while Wu Tingfang said with a laugh, "What's so strange, Tingfang already belongs to you. Father and Mother has no objections, so naturally I'm moving in to stay with you."

Xiang Shaolong did not imagine that in this era, there would actually be cohabitation. He suddenly understood, to the Wu family talk about loyalty and piety are all unreliable words. The most reliable would be to use the Wu family's most alluring beauty to bind his body and heart.

But he is indeed extremely fond and infatuated with Wu Tingfang, so he said with a laugh, "I have the power and the responsibility to ask you for bed tax every night before you're allowed to sleep."

Wu Tingfang's pretty face blushed and she stared at him charmingly before

instructing the servants how she wants her things to be placed and how she wants the 2 rooms and side hall, which has been set aside for her at the East Chamber, decorated. Ting Fangshi came to his side and said with a laugh, "Grand Young Miss said that there're 8 rooms in the West Chamber, the first room is mine, the rest will be for the women you marry in future. If it's not enough, we can ask someone to build another extension." Xiang Shaolong put his arms around her waist and asked, "Happy?" Ting Fangshi nodded her head shyly, her expression overjoyed.

To be able to make the woman he loves happy, is a man's greatest achievement. He thought of a matter and asked, "The beauties that came with you to Handan, do you know where they've gone?"

Ting Fangshi shook her head sadly, and said, "I heard that some of them were sent away to become camp prostitutes. Besides me, none of them are in Wu residence." Only now was Xiang Shaolong's question answered. No wonder they have to look for so many beauties in the villages, so it's to comfort the army who have left their hometown and are now stationed overseas. He can't help but feel pity for them.

Only by unifying the various states and establishing a new law and regime, will this problem of belittling women's rights be solved. Hai! Even if the world is unified, they still have about 2000 odd years to go before there can be some hope of civilization. This is such a far and difficult journey.

After lunch, he hugged Ting Fangshi as he took an afternoon nap and only woke up a little after 3pm. Wu Tingfang is still happily decorating her room at this time. After Xiang Shaolong freshened up, he went to her room and

looked on with interest as Chunying and the other maids worked under her instructions.

Although it's called a room, but the size is even bigger than the modern man's living room. The most eye-catching item is the huge bed which took up a quarter of the room, and it can sleep 7 to 8 people very comfortably. The bed itself is like a room. The 4 corners of the bed were 4 round wooden pillars carved with flowers, with wooden beams cementing it to the roof and hung on it were huge curtains.

Once he thought of this beauty waiting obediently every night on this bed that has layers of thick blankets, with pillows all over the bed, waiting for his love, his heart began burning.

There's even a copper mirror, huge wardrobe and chests, and soft carpet on the ground. On the table in the corner of the room there's a copper incense burner, burning an intoxicating fragrance. This is the first time Xiang Shaolong tasted such an atmosphere. In this romantic room with the fragrance wafting around, he really does not want to think about the devious world outside.

Hai! If only he does not have to go and see Zhao Mu tonight. With Wu Tingfang around, the 4 maids were more serious and dared not flirt and joke with him as usual. Wu Tingfang came to him sweating sweetly and holding his hand, asked him, "Is Fang'er's room decorated comfortably?" Xiang Shaolong replied with a smile, "I appreciate the huge bed the most." Wu Tingfang took a look at him and smiled charmingly, "After you return from your feast tonight, remember to climb up the bed! I'll stay awake and wait

for you.” Xiang Shaolong chortled and pulled her as he walked out and said with a laugh, “Come! Let me serve you while you bath.” Wu Tingfang felt her neck burning and although she said no, but her dainty little feet still went after him obediently.

That evening, Zhao Mu sent a carriage to pick him up and send him to his residence at the north of the city. Surprisingly the place was not decorated, nor were there a welcoming party. Zhao Mu received him at an elegant porch in the back garden. On one side there’s a huge window, and looking out the window with the drawn blinds is a breathtaking scenery. The two of them leaned on the soft cushion and sat on the carpet, separated by a huge table in between which was filled with wine and dishes. The atmosphere was nice and after the servants retreated, only the 2 of them were left.

As Zhao Mu encouraged him to drink, he also off handedly asked about his background. Xiang Shaolong hurriedly told him the story he had already made up, and spoke about how he met Tao Fang. Once he thought of the spy Li Shan, he spoke the truth as well, not hiding a single thing from him. Naturally Zhao Mu knows that he is not lying and was very satisfied and said, “Shaolong’s sword skills were obviously imparted by a good teacher, I wonder who your teacher is?”

Xiang Shaolong wanted to say that he learnt it from a recluse staying deep in the mountains but their eyes met and he could feel the anticipation in the other person’s eyes. He had a change of mind and thought that by using a wooden sword to fight his enemy, he may already have revealed his connection with Mozi Sect.

Yuan Zong once said that Handan is Zhao Mo's base and if Zhao Mo's leader Yan Ping wants fame and fortune, naturally he will have to throw in his lot with the King of Zhao. So maybe Zhao Mu has already guessed his relation with Yuan Zong, so he hurriedly changed his tack and told him selectively about how he ended up being down and out in Wu An and how he met Yuan Zong. He stressed that because he is in pursuit of fame and riches, he refused to join Yuan Zong's organization. His relationship with Yuan Zong is purely friendship. Zhao Mu smiled when he heard this, and with a 'dang' he sounded the bell next to him, which will summon the servants. Xiang Shaolong thought to himself that it's a close shave and although he knows what is happening, he pretended to look at him in bewilderment.

Indeed, a tall and thin man wearing hemp clothes walked in barefooted. Xiang Shaolong saw that this person's bearing is serious, his face sinister, his eyes sharp like an eagle and he has the air of a highly skilled pugilist, and looks imposing. He secretly thought to himself that no wonder even a highly skilled pugilist like Yuan Zong has to run for his life. That person came up to the both of them and paid his respects before sitting down on the carpet. Although his back was rim rod straight, it doesn't seem that he feels awkward in any way.

Zhao Mu said with a smile, "This is Mr Yan Ping, who is the Juzi of the Mozi Sect in Handan, and also a guest of his Majesty. He was sitting next door earlier, and has heard everything that Shaolong said earlier." Yan Ping looked at Shaolong coldly and said, "Imperial Protector was able to defeat Lian Jin, obviously you have been taught by the traitor of our Mozi Sect, Yuan Zong. I wonder if he has handed you his Juzi token as well?" Xiang Shaolong felt a stab in his heart and knows that Yuan Zong has been killed by them. They

could not find the Juzi Token after searching his body, that's why they asked him. He pretended not to understand and asked, "What Juzi Token?"

Yan Ping sized him up for a moment before saying to Zhao Mu calmly, "I believe that Yuan Zong will not hand the Juzi token to an outsider. But as to why he would impart his sword skills to Imperial Protector, that is something I still cannot understand." Zhao Mu asked in astonishment, "How do you know that Shaolong is not the holder of the Juzi token?" Yan Ping replied slowly, "Us Mozi follows the way of being frugal and hard-working. Our abode are simple thatched huts, we use earthen bowls, drink think soup, eat coarse grains of rice and wear hemp and deer skin. If Yuan Zong is willing to hand him the Juzi token, it will be because he has become a Mohist. But Imperial Protector is not keeping himself away from women and good food, obviously he is not a Mohist." Xiang Shaolong and Zhao Mu were equally surprised.

Zhao Mu no longer harbors any suspicions towards Xiang Shaolong and he said happily, "I admire Shaolong's honesty and selfless attitude very much." He added with a lowered voice, "If Shaolong had been lying earlier, I'm afraid your blood would have been spilled by now." Xiang Shaolong pretended to be terrified and said, "Thank you Marquis for your trust." But in his heart he was secretly cursing his ancestors. Yan Ping stood up quietly.

Xiang Shaolong said politely, "I am indebted to Mr Yuan Zong for teaching me his skills, I wonder where is he now? That time he suddenly urged me to leave Wu An, and yet he refused to travel with me. I felt that something is not quite right but at that time I was not yet aware that he is related to Mohism."

Yan Ping said icily, “It’s best that you are unaware, and it’s best that Imperial Protector do not ask about the affairs of us Mohists in future.” He bid his farewell to Zhao Mu after he finished his words, and left. After he left, Zhao Mu said with a laugh, “Juzi is well respected, and has 300 death warriors under him, each of them highly skilled, and each one of them can fight against a hundred people. Juzi himself is the best among the highly skilled. Even when he sees his Majesty, he need not pay his respects, so he’s already being quite polite to Shaolong.” Of course Xiang Shaolong had to show that he did not mind, but in his heart he was thinking how he can avenge his benefactor Yuan Zong.

Zhao Mu smiled slightly, and the scar on his face twitched slightly, making his smile look especially cold and heartless. A flash of brilliant light flashed past his eyes and he said nonchalantly, “I am very pleased with Shaolong’s performance, so I shall be frank and tell Shaolong what I feel.” Xiang Shaolong knows that the act is coming, so he pretended to be all ears. But undeniably, Zhao Mu has a certain charm about him, no wonder Zhao Ya was infatuated with him for so many years.

Zhao Mu stared at him and said, “To me, everyone in the world is either a friend or an enemy. If you’re my man, I can guarantee you endless wealth, beauties, power and status. But if you become my enemy, I will use all means to destroy you.” Xiang Shaolong thought to himself, how tyrannical can you be, but he said respectfully instead, “Shaolong understands!” Zhao Mu said, “Shaolong, don’t blame me for my bad choice in choosing Lian Jin, that’s why I dealt with you. However I underestimated you. Until now I still do not understand why is it that even after you’ve been given strong aphrodisiac, you’re still in control of your senses and was able to emerge the victor

instead of the loser?"

Of course Xiang Shaolong cannot tell him that he overheard his nefarious plot, so he pretended to be embarrassed and replied, "I'm lecherous by nature, and added to the fact that I am very popular with women, so sometimes I cannot handle them all and have to use aphrodisiacs. Initially just one or two pills will be enough to take effect, but once I've used them too much, I have to take them in large quantities before any effect can be seen. Therefore I'm not really afraid of such things." Zhao Mu slapped the table and chortled, "So that's the case. But your body is indeed a gift from heaven, you still have very good stamina after such strenuous activities." His bright eyes roamed his body. Xiang Shaolong was secretly feeling worried, if this homosexual takes a liking to him, it'll be terrible.

Luckily Zhao Mu very quickly retracted his stare, and said seriously, "In the past Shaolong belongs to the Wu family, there's no debate about that. But now that you've become his Majesty's personal protector, you need to be impartial and put Great Zhao in front of all other things. Do Shaolong understand my meaning?"

Shaolong replied seriously. "Naturally Shaolong knows who is the one I should be loyal to, Marquis please put your mind at ease." Zhao Mu said with relief, "I will test you on a few matters, once I've confirmed your loyalty, I will naturally promote you heavily to his Majesty, and I promise that your future will be bright. It won't be too far fetched thinking for you to be appointed as duke or marquis." Xiang Shaolong pretended to be overjoyed, got up and kow towed his thanks. But in his heart he was secretly lamenting, what if he wants to borrow Wu Tingfang and have fun for a few nights, what shall he do

then? Zhao Mu chuckled, "Get up quickly, talk about work will end here, now it's time for us to enjoy."

"Dang! Dang!" This time Xiang Shaolong opened his eyes wide to see who will be coming in. Zhao Mu is the second most important person in the state of Zhao, so the things he show off to others won't be too bad. Zhao Mu looked at his expression and thought to himself that this person is willing to work for Tao Fang for just 50 copper coins, and is lecherous as well, so with his lure of fame and beauty, there's no way he won't work for him. The sound of bangles jingling was heard and a pair of beauties walked into the porch carrying a long satin pouch.

Xiang Shaolong looked more thoroughly and his eyes immediately shone. It turns out that not only are the girls dressed similarly, with their hair piled high up, wearing a thin gauze as sheer as the wings of a fly, hiding and revealing their snowy skin at the same time. The tight inner layer bounded the voluptuous body that is waiting to burst out of its bindings, the pretty features on their faces are identical, it turns out that they are twins. Their eyes were bright and clear, only a think layer of make up on their pretty face, but their glowing jade skin is even more eye catching than anyone else with make up. Beneath their long and slim eyebrows, their bright eyes looked lively, with 2 bewitching dimples on their cheeks, enough to charm anyone before they even smiled. Their beauty is divine, their body enticing. Their looks are prettier than Shu'er, and only lose a little to Wu Tingfang and Zhao Ya.

The 2 girls dragged the long satin pouch together, and walked daintily towards them and knelt down. They lowered their head and said at the same

time, “Ladies from the State of Yue, Tian Zhen and Tian Feng pay their respects to Imperial Protector Xiang.” Only now did Xiang Shaolong regain his senses, and when he saw Zhao Mu staring at him, he smiled embarrassingly. Zhao Mu took over the long satin pouch and leaving the 2 of them to continue kneeling, he loosened the pouch and took out an ancient sword. He said with a laugh, “When it comes to making swords, no one can surpass the sword smiths from the State of Yue, they were the ones who made the first metal sword. The swords that they made through fire is so much more effective than the previous era’s copper swords. This Yue sword in my hand is named Flying Rainbow. I see that your wooden sword is extremely heavy and not convenient to carry around, and as the saying goes, a precious sword can only match a hero, so I will give you this sword tonight.”

Xiang Shaolong was secretly exclaiming how formidable. It seems that this Zhao Mu really knows how to bribe. If not for the fact that he came from the 21st century, with his own principles and attitude towards gratitude and hatred, he may really have been bought over by him. He pretended to be thankful and took over the long sword respectfully. The sword may be heavy, but it’s a lot lighter compared to the wooden sword. The 2 girls were still kneeling, their snowy white necks, their tightened waists, their puffed up bosoms, is enough to make anyone have other thoughts. Their submissiveness, makes one feel that they can be tortured at will, which adds on to one’s fantasy. Zhao Mu saw him holding the sword and looking at the 2 girls morosely and joked, “Precious sword and beauties, I think Shaolong prefers the latter. But why don’t you take a look at the sword first!”

Xiang Shaolong hurriedly pulled the sword out from the sheath. A cold air and a bright reflection came out together with the sword, like the moon

breaking out from behind the clouds. Flying Rainbow was five feet long, and there seems to be a intricate design on its body, the pommel was designed to look like 7 phoenix eyes inlaid with gold with blue colored glaze. The sword was straight and flat, good for slashing or chopping, the tip of the sword long and pointed, and extremely sharp. Even for someone like Xiang Shaolong who's not really an expert, he can tell that what he's holding in his hand is a treasure.

He was still concentrating and looking at the sword when he suddenly heard Zhao Mu ask, "Will Shaolong be choosing the elder or younger sister?" Xiang Shaolong was stunned for a moment and asked, "There's isn't any difference, right!" He secretly sighed, since he proclaimed himself a lecher, naturally he'll have to put on a convincing act, but luckily this is not a difficult task.

Zhao Mu's eyes settled on the dainty bodies of this pair of sisters from Yue and said with a lecherous smile, "Usually there's no difference at all, but when it comes to the bed, you'll see the difference." He commanded with a low voice, "Stand up and take off your clothes." The pair of Yue twin sisters stood up on hearing the command, and blushing a little, obediently removed the outer layer of gauze and their innerwear, revealing their snowy white naked body. Their skin was as soft and shiny as white jade, glowing under the light reflected from the lamp. Especially the welcoming and come-hither expression on their faces, any man who sees that will feel blood rushing through their bodies and their hearts pumping in excitement.

The 2 girls were stealing looks at the handsome and muscular Xiang Shaolong, this is the first time they've seen such a fine man. Xiang Shaolong felt as if he's now in the world's most elegant and upper class brothel,

enjoying how he's being treated like an emperor. He's seen many women, but it's the first time he's seen a pair of perfect, identical beauties. No wonder Zhao Mu ignored Lady Ya, because he has too many choices, and he has to deal with the King of Zhao as well.

Precisely because of this, he started having sadistic tendencies, and tortured and killed his beloved Shu'er. Now he's trying to bribe him with beauties to make use of him to destroy the Wu family. Zhao Mu's gaze roamed around the 2 women's body and said with an appreciative sigh, "Look, only Yue women's bodies are like theirs, like a tender grass bending as the wind blows. Our Zhao women are a little plumper, only Wu Tingfang and Zhao Ya are rare exceptions."

Xiang Shaolong heard the way he mention Wu Tingfang and Zhao Ya under such circumstances and was furious. But he can only remain silent. Zhao Mu sighed again and was about to speak, when Xiang Shaolong, who's afraid he is going to bring up his request about Wu Tingfang, suddenly stood up and said, "Heh! Marquis, I would like to relieve myself for a moment. I've had too much to drink." Besides the excuse that he needs the toilet, he really cannot think of any other excuses.

Zhao Mu smiled and said, "The elder sister will accompany Shaolong!" Tian Zhen agreed and walked Shaolong in.

Xiang Shaolong followed this naked beauty, looking at her alluring body, and feel embarrassed and hilarious at the same time, secretly thinking that in the past others have been saying that he's stubborn and outrageous. But compared to these royalty in ancient times, he's a small fry compared to

them. But then only women in this era would be willing to serve men like that. In the 21st century, if you ask a newly acquainted lady to help you to the toilet, it'll be strange if she doesn't give you a slap first. If he can return to the 21st century, once he reveals a bit of what happens here, he's sure that the queue of men wanting to take the time travel machine will be long enough to go round the world a few times.

Once they went behind the screen, the alluring Yue beauty knelt down and held up the chamber pot, which was placed behind the screen and waited for him to pee. Looking at her blushing face, Xiang Shaolong does not know whether to laugh or cry, and thought to himself, how can he pee like that? He could hear from beyond the screen moans and pants, and he knows without even looking that Zhao Mu is now molesting that pretty sister.

Tian Zhen's face blushed redder and stole a glance at him, chewing her lips. Obviously she is aroused once she heard those sounds. Xiang Shaolong had no intention of peeing at all, it was just an excuse to avoid talking with Zhao Mu, so he said quietly, "Put it down!" Tian Zhen was stunned but still put the chamber pot down obediently.

Xiang Shaolong pulled her up and thought to himself that it's better to do it with her here than in front of that bisexual Zhao Mu. It would be such a pity to let such a beauty off. Besides, that would make Zhao Mu more suspicious of him, so without hesitation, he pulled her into his arms and started helping himself to her. For a moment, the alluring sounds of women moaning can be heard from inside and outside the screen.

Chapter 6

The death of the King of Qin

When Xiang Shaolong was in the carriage going back to the Wu residence, he was still reliving his experience earlier.

Either deliberately or not, separated by a screen, they were having a competition on sexual stamina with the pair of Yue beauties. In the end Xiang Shaolong deliberately lost to him and ended his act earlier. As expected when he carried the limp elder sister Tian Zhen out, Zhao Mu and Tian Feng were almost half-dead, so naturally he could not ask him for Wu Tingfang now.

By now Xiang Shaolong is aware that although Zhao Mu's swordsmanship is excellent, but his stamina cannot be compared to a warrior like him. He hurriedly bid his farewell.

Tian Zhen can't bear to let him go, and the look in her eyes shows that she wants to swallow him whole.

Zhao Mu is smart, naturally he knows that Xiang Shaolong gave in to him deliberately. He was secretly complimenting Xiang Shaolong for his consideration and knowing what to do, so he ordered his men to send him back to the Wu residence in his carriage to show how much he admires him.

The grand looking carriage drove out of the Marquis residence, traveling lonsomely in the quiet and dark streets.

4 warriors walked in front holding lanterns to lead the way for the horse carriage, another 4 warriors walked behind the carriage for protection.

Xiang Shaolong was troubled, thinking of endless people and things. Now he is totally immersed in this era, if there is a choice, he would not want to go back to his own era.

Just as he was day dreaming, he was suddenly jolted awake but the hurried sounds of hooves beat.

Xiang Shaolong became alert and looked towards the back of the carriage.

The 4 warriors were just turning their heads to look back.

The darkened street, a lone steed was running near, and by the time they could take a good look, they saw that it's a warrior dressed in black, with a black cloth covering the head and face as well, in his hand a long sword, galloping towards them with murderous intent. One look and he knows that it's nothing good.

The 4 warriors roared in unison and drew their swords, pulling their horses back to receive the enemy.

The assassin increased his speed and came towards them like a hurricane. He lifted his hand and took out something black from the saddlebag of the horse and flew towards the sky. When he leapt over their heads, it became a huge net with sharp hooks, covering the head and faces of the 4 warriors.

The 4 warriors may be highly skilled, but their opponent came prepared, and he uses ingenious methods so that they are caught unawares and in a short moment the 4 of them were trapped.

As they yelled in surprise, they struggled to get out from the net but the sharp hooks in the net tore into their skins. Amidst their screams, the 4 of them tumbled down their horses in a heap.

When the assassin came to the side of the carriage, there was a flash from his blade and the bamboo window shattered, scaring Xiang Shaolong into scrambling to a corner. Right at this time that person throw a long thing into the carriage and when it landed on the floor of the carriage, it moved and wriggled towards Xiang Shaolong.

Xiang Shaolong took a clearer look and secretly exclaimed. He turned a somersault and fell onto the streets outside through the window. It turned out that thing thrown towards him is a poisonous snake with its head raised. If he did not have extremely quick reflexes, he'll definitely be bitten by that poisonous snake.

While Xiang Shaolong was still rolling on the ground, that assassin slashed at the fallen warriors and shot 4 arrows at the other 4 warriors rushing towards him. In their rush, the 4 warriors did not see what was happening and were hit by the arrows and fell.

The assassin turned his horse back and ran towards Xiang Shaolong who was still on the ground.

This is the first time Xiang Shaolong encountered someone so formidable, and just as he was about to spring up, that assassin shot an arrow at him, fierce and accurate.

Xiang Shaolong has no choice but to tumble away, and avoided his opponent's 3 consecutive arrows before he had a chance to jump up.

Maybe the assassin used up his arrows, so he switched to a long sword and attacked.

Xiang Shaolong did not have a chance to draw his sword and had to tumble away to avoid him again. But this time he tumbled towards the back of his opponent's horse. His opponent only managed to turn the horse around after he jumped up again and drew the Flying Rainbow sword Zhao Mu gave him.

The two of them met directly face to face.

The assassin was stunned and shouted, "You're not Zhao Mu?"

Xiang Shaolong heard the high-pitched voice, it's actually a lady, and was startled.

The masked lady shouted and dashed forward on her horse, and when she was about 5 steps away, the glare from her sword blossomed like a flower, attacking towards him like a storm.

Xiang Shaolong saw that the person she wanted to kill is his own enemy Zhao Mu, so he was not willing to hurt her. But he saw that her swordplay is

extremely exquisite, and his hands began to itch and he executed the Mozi swordplay, trying to flick his opponent's sword with a diagonal slash. He was about to strike his opponent's sword but unexpectedly the tip of the sword touched empty air, it turned out his aim was out and his opponent's sword has already taken the opportunity to invade directly.

Xiang Shaolong did not expect her to be so formidable and he had to move diagonally down suddenly to avoid her.

The girl did not return for him but rode away in her horse, cursing icily, "Working for the devil." The sound of hooves beat grow further and further, into the darkened streets.

The 8 warriors were all dead, obviously the arrows and hooks were dipped in extremely poisonous substances, and even strong men like them could not hold on for long.

The streets were soon filled with Zhao soldiers looking for the whereabouts of the assassin.

Zhao Mu's expression was serious as he said, "The poisonous snake that person threw into the carriage is called 'Golden Throat Seal', its movements are swift as lightning, and extremely venomous. Once bitten the throat will become constricted immediately. Shaolong is really lucky that you were able to jump out the carriage in time."

Xiang Shaolong heaved a sigh of cold air. He was relying on his reflexes from his many years of training. The poisonous snake was going to bite his leg and

he was able to retract his legs in time and somersaulted out the window, which was indeed a very dangerous situation.

Zhao Mu patted his shoulder and said, “Luckily you helped me block off this bad luck. If it was me, she might have gotten what she wanted.” He added with a cold snort, “I’ll like to see where she can run to.”

Right at this time a rider rushed over and after getting off his horse, he came to Zhao Mu and spoke a few words in his ears.

Zhao Mu was ecstatic on hearing the news and told Xiang Shaolong, “I have something important to speak to his Majesty about immediately, I will discuss with you about the assassin later.” He went up his horse and left, with a hundred odd warriors hurrying after him.

Xiang Shaolong was secretly alarmed, what news did Zhao Mu receive that made him so excited?

But since it’s no use pondering over it, Xiang Shaolong went up the horse and returned to the Wu residence with the accompaniment of 12 guards.

He had just stepped past the main door when the guard stationed at the door took him to the study room immediately. Wu Yingyuan and Tao Fang were both there, their expressions grave. Obviously something serious has happened.

After Xiang Shaolong sat down, Master Wu said, “The King of Qin is dead!”

Xiang Shaolong looked at him blankly, thinking that the King of Qin is not your father, so what if he's dead.

Tao Fang knows that he does not understand the critical point in this matter and said, "The successor is King Xiaowen and during the bereavement period, the state of Qin will not engage their army for some time. Therefore all the other states will make use of this time to engage the plans they set aside earlier due to their fear of Qin attacking, and this includes expanding and conquering other smaller states."

Xiang Shaolong finally understood and said, "So we have to be worried that the King of Zhao will step up on his efforts to deal with us."

Wu Yingyuan sighed, "This is not our biggest worry. But because I'm always in contact with Qin's Lu Buwei. This person is wealthy and scheming, and was our greatest back up, but the newly crowned King Xiaowen may seem respectful to him for saving his son, he's still wary of him as he's a Han. Ever since Lu Buwei went to Qin, he's only a very wealthy guest and has no power at all, and everyone knows Xiaowen was behind all these. Now that he has ascended the throne, Lu Buwei may lose his standing and this will break off all our relations with Qin.

Xiang Shaolong thought of something and asked quietly, "Is Lu Buwei trying to get Ying Zheng back to Xianyang through us?"

The 3 of them looked immediately stunned and stared at him speechlessly, as if it's the first time they knew him.

After the 3 of them exchanged looks, Master Wu's fat body trembled for a moment before he took a deep breath and said, "Shaolong is indeed more astute than others, and your words strike close to the heart. But you must not leak any of this out, or else not a single piece of tile will be left intact in the Wu family's castle."

Xiang Shaolong laughed to himself, "I even know that Ying Zheng is actually the son of Lu Buwei borne by Zhao Ji, and Lu Buwei gave Zhao Ji to the King of Qin and she was already pregnant at that time. So the King is only Ying Zheng's father in name. But some historians later pointed out that Emperor Qin was cruel towards Lu Buwei, so it doesn't really seem like Lu Buwei is his birth father. Such a messy affair, no one is really clear about it.

Anyway it's a fact that Lu Buwei wants to get Yingzheng back to Xianyang. Wu Yingyuan said, "Amongst the 4 great princes, Prince Pingyuan of Zhao has passed away, Huang Xie, who is Prince Chunshen of Chu is useless, and we can ignore him. Prince Mengchang of Qi is always sickly which leaves us with Wei's Prince Xinling, Wuji. This person is well versed in the art of war and has numerous capable men under him. He took care of Zhao because Prince Pingyuan's wife is his sister but now that Prince Pingyuan is dead, I'm afraid change is inevitable."

Master Wu nodded his head and said, "The death of the king of Qin, has really further complicated matters which are already complicated, but for us there's only advantages and no disadvantages. Because Zhao will certainly take the opportunity while the strong Qin is ceasing war to expand, so they'll have no time to deal with us. We even have time to take a breather and plan at leisure. Heaven is indeed helping us."

Tao Fang laughed, “The Yans are going to be in trouble!”

Wu Yingyuan shook his head and sighed, “That is called getting what they deserve. The King of Zhao will certainly take the opportunity to carve them up so that he can expand his territory. But I hear that Prince Dan of Yan is a talent, so it’s best that they can drag Zhao along for a few years, then we’ll have a lot of time.”

They continued their discussion a little longer and decided not to contact Lu Buwei for the time being, and not touch Ying Zheng, who is a prisoner of war, for the moment. They will sit and watch what happens before making a decision and after the discussion, each went their own ways.”

Xiang Shaolong went back to his Hidden Dragon Abode, and of the 4 maids only Dongying, who was the most fair and voluptuous amongst them were struggling to stay awake and wait for him. The rest of the ladies were already in dreamland.

Dongying helped him shower and change but when Xiang Shaolong saw that her clothes were all drenched, he served her instead and helped her remove her wet clothing and dry her body.

Dongying was embarrassed, ecstatic and stunned but of course she will not push him away. She could only let him wipe her body with the towel and as her body started heating up, she heard Xiang Shaolong asking her, “How long have all of you been in the Wu family?”

Dongying replied quietly, “The 3 of us were sold into the Wu family since

young." She continued in a whisper, "Now we only ask that Master does not think too badly of us, and let us serve you for the rest of our lives. That would be our greatest reward. We've never seen someone as easygoing as Master."

Xiang Shaolong secretly exclaimed to himself that no one else in this era respects women as much as him. Pity rose up in him and he hugged her, kissing and caressing, but still controlling himself, not daring to arouse her too much. He has been going from women to women these few days and has enjoyed this ancient era's life of merrymaking, wine and beauties. Never has he been so uncontrolled. He just had fun with the Yue lady earlier, so no matter what delectable beauty is in front of him now, he can only let go of the opportunity for now.

He whispered into her ears, "Tell the other 3 sisters of yours, I'll find a night to try all of you together, and let you have a taste of a man." He secretly thought that if Tao Fang can have 7 women in one go, he should not have any problems handling 4.

Dongying was ecstatic and although she can't bear to leave, she went back to her room.

Xiang Shaolong went to take a look at Ting Fangshi first and covered her up with the blanket before going into Wu Tingfang's room and climbed onto the bed.

That lass is actually naked, but luckily girls of her age are usually sleepyheads. Xiang Shaolong was secretly thanking his lucky stars and as he hugged her, he thought of other things. When he thought of that formidable female assassin,

he was so tired he fell asleep right until morning.

The 3 maids could have heard about the ‘good news’ from Dongying so their attitude towards Xiang Shaoong now is even more bashful. If Ting Fangshi and Wu Tingfang is not with him having breakfast now, he might not be able to constrain himself and start feasting now that his energy is recharged.

At Hidden Dragon Abode, Xiang Shaolong felt like he’s in a land of beauties and he almost forgot he’s from the 21st century. He took the opportunity to touch the 4 maids while they were serving him tea and food and the 4 maids naturally bashfully allowed his rude behavior. Wu Tingfang grew up in a wealthy family and is used to seeing such things happening, so to her it’s a normal situation. She did not mind at all and was even smiling. With him by her side, Ting Fangshi is already very satisfied. Besides, she’s used to obeying men so she will never have the intention of interfering.

Xiang Shaolong was purely enjoying himself, thinking that he will not be sick of a lifetime of such a holiday. Just as he was lamenting that men of this era is really fortunate, he was summoned by the King of Zhao into the palace.

The ladies all grumbled while Xiang Shaolong was secretly cursing the king’s ancestors. But since it’s an order from the big boss, he can only pack up his lecherous thoughts and hurried to the Palace.

The King of Zhao received him in a small hall adjacent to the main hall. Naturally Zhao Mu is his guest as well, but there’s Lady Ya and Guo Zhong as well, something which is out of his expectations. There were 2 other people, and after some introductions, one of them turned out to be the famous great

general and premier who had just fought with the Yans and had hurried back from the front line, Lian Po.

He's not very tall, but quite stout and his manner is imposing. He's about 50 years old, with a wide face which looks extremely well traveled. Although he looked tired, his deep set eyes was still bright. He looks commanding but not cruel, making one feel that he's an elder worthy of respect.

The other person is General Li Mu, who is tall and thin, only 2 inches shorter than Xiang Shaolong, but for that era he's considered quite tall. He is not older than 40, his looks are stern, carrying the solidity and grace of a soldier.

Lian Po and Li Mu were both sizing him up very carefully.

The King of Zhao told him to dispense with ceremony and offered him a seat.

Zhao Mu said with a straight face, "Shaolong you don't know how lucky you are. You have not officially started on your job yet and now there's an important task for you to take charge of."

Xiang Shaolong was secretly cursing as he voiced out his thanks.

The King of Zhao said with a smile, "There's no one else more suitable than you, because not only must this person be highly skilled and brave, he must also be intelligent and alert, to handle anything that may happen unexpectedly. If you can accomplish this mission, not only will you be greatly rewarded on your return, but you'll be promoted to General as well."

Xiang Shaolong hurriedly replied, “Please give your orders, your Majesty, I will brave through fire and water and will not decline.”

All 6 pairs of eyes were pinned on him.

The King of Zhao asked Lian Po respectfully, “Does Premier thinks that this person can be used?”

Lian Po’s intelligent eyes shone as he said, “Shaolong is only an Imperial Protector, but he still maintained a calm composure when he saw us, obviously he is someone who is bold and smart. His movements reveals that he’s a skilled martial artists, and it’s extremely rare that there’s no flaws in him at all. But what I admire most is that although he knows that the mission is not going to be easy, he did not reveal any fear at all, nor did he show any joy on hearing the rewards. It’s indeed the great fortune of Zhao to have such a talent.”

Lady Ya was ecstatic on hearing this well respected Lian Po complimenting her lover and she stole a glance at Zhao Mu, only to see a flash of murderous intent in his eyes. Apparently he is now harboring thoughts of killing Xiang Shaolong.

Xiang Shaolong was thinking that this Lian Po indeed has formidable insight, no wonder he could become a famed general in Zhao and he immediately said his humble thanks.

Guo Zhong however was thinking that even Zhao Mu and Lian Jin could not topple you, so who else could be more suitable than him for this mission in

Zhao.

The King of Zhao laughed heartily and said, “Heaven is helping my country, heaven is helping my country.” He turned towards Zhao Mu and said, “Would Marquis Julu please explain this mission to Shaolong.”

Zhao Mu faked a smile and said warmly, “The mission this time may seem simple on the surface, which is to let Shaolong lead 500 riders and escort Lady Pingyuan, her son and Lady Ya to the state of Wei to visit their relatives and to engage in friendly exchanges. Of course, there’s something else to it as well, why don’t I let Mr Guo say it personally.”

Xiang Shaolong shuddered, isn’t Prince Shaoyuan the son of Lady Pingyuan? Both of them are like fire and water, why do they want him to escort them? And why does Lady Ya need to go to Wei?

Guo Zhong lowered his voice and said, “Prince Xinling of Wei recently received a book, which documents the best carpenter in the state of Lu, Gongshu Ban’s* detailed descriptions of the making of various weapons. In all there are 108 machineries of various sizes. One of the pages were leaked and ended up in my hands, and it describes the method of making the cloud ladder that can be used to besiege cities and this ladder is far better than any cloud ladders in use now by all the other states. If we can get this ‘Secret Manual of Lu Gong’, Great Zhao will definitely become the greatest, and the state of Wei will not be able to use this book and strengthen themselves.”

Li Mu, who has been quiet all these time, spoke up, “I’ve heard of this matter, and know that one of the pages describes the making of weapons,

and using a new formula and pure fire, it can make metal become even harder. If we can get this secret manual, we will be able to have the best weapons."

The King of Zhao said a little worriedly, "Prince Xinling is sharp and he has a lot of men under him. Luckily Imperial Sister once had a relation with him, so he kept writing to beg Imperial Sister to visit him in Wei. That's why we can have such a good excuse to send you to escort Imperial Sister there."

Xiang Shaolong thought to himself, so that's the case. He looked over at Lady Ya in surprise, and remembered that she's an expert in stealing information.

Lady Ya is afraid that he would be unhappy to know that she once had an affair with Prince Xinling as well and she lowered her head.

Lian Po and Li Mu exchanged glances, both knowing what this is all about.

A look of hatred and jealousy flashed past Zhao Mu's face again. For such a possessive man like him, even if he is the one who has given up on the woman, he still does not want her heart and body to be taken by another man.

Lian Po said offhandedly, "Marquis Julu has recommended many people but I objected to all of them. Because Prince Xinling knows their background too well, it'll be difficult for them to accomplish much. It was Lady Ya who recommended Shaolong, so Shaolong should show your gratitude to her for allowing you a chance to excel."

Once Xiang Shaolong heard this, he was overjoyed. He knew immediately that Lian Po and Zhao Mu are not on good relationship, that's why he rebutted him publicly. He dared not look at Zhao Mu and asked instead, "When do we leave?"

The King of Zhao replied, "I've sent men to inform Prince Xinling swiftly, you should be able to leave within the next 5 days. General Li will send scouts ahead first to help you settle all the formalities needed to leave the country along the way."

Zhao Mu interrupted, "Shaolong cannot return to the Wu residence for these 5 days, you have to stay in the palace until it's time to leave. I'll send someone to inform the Wu family, and they can send people here with things for you or to visit you, understand?"

Xiang Shaolong secretly lamented and after agreeing helplessly, he said, "I have a few gadgets in mind that will be helpful for this mission, I wonder if I can get the craftsmen to make it for me."

Everyone was stunned, and Guo Zhong said with a laugh, "That's easy, I'll send experts to serve you. No matter how difficult it is, they must finish it for you within these 5 days."

Xiang Shaolong was ecstatic and thought to himself that he'll just have to make some light tools that he used to use in the special task force, and they're sure to be far better than Lu Ban's so called exquisite weapons. However he'll split up the components and ask Guo Zhong's men to make it and he will reassemble them himself in Wei. In that way the other party will

not be able to learn the advanced techniques that is 2000 years ahead of them.

After the King of Zhao dismissed all of them, only Lian Po was left behind to discuss matters regarding Yan.

After they left the hall Zhao Ya happily pulled Xiang Shaolong towards the back palace and said with a smile, “Don’t pull such a long face because you cannot get to see your Wu family’s beauty! Ya’er is here to accompany you?”

Xiang Shaolong said with a bitter smile, “Actually which are the powerful men who do not have any relationship with you? Can you tell me a few?”

Lady Ya said quietly, “I’ve begged for your forgiveness long ago. Hei! You’re jealous.” And she cast a flirtatious look at him.

Xiang Shaolong knows that he cannot be too calculative over this so he changed the subject, “Is Lady Pingyuan and Prince Shaoyuan simply just going to Wei to visit relatives?”

Lady Ya waited until they were far away from 2 palace maids who were paying their respects to them before whispering in his ears, “They will not return once they go.”

Xiang Shaolong exclaimed hoarsely, “What?”

Lady Ya sighed sadly, “It’s all because of the battle of Changping. Our population has always been lower than other states, and now that 400,000 of

our strong young men has died, we have been encouraging our people to give birth for these past 9 years. It's been ruled that for girls who have reached 20 years of age and are still unmarried, the local magistrates will decide for them and anyone who refuses will be sent to the army camps as prostitutes. But unless we have another 10 years, it'll be difficult to regain the population we have lost. That's why everyone thinks lowly of us, or else the King of Yan would not have dared to attack Handan."

Xiang Shaolong exclaimed, "But we're the winner now!"

Lady Ya brought him to a huge, beautiful garden and hidden amongst the trees, was another exquisite palace building.

She reach out her hands to hold his muscular arms and said helplessly, "What's the use of a short victory. Besides Yan, everyone else is also eyeing our location with our east facing Yan, west facing Qin, north facing Han and Wei and south joining Humo. Others can afford to lose, but for us every single loss will weaken us more, and who knows when we will fall again. Imperial brother is useless, to place so much trust on that useless and conniving Zhao Mu." As she spoke, she gritted her teeth, ever so hateful of Zhao Mu who have cheated and discarded her.

Xiang Shaolong finally experienced the feeling of how one will only care for themselves in the face of danger. Isn't Wu Yingyuan having thoughts of betrayal because of this as well?

The Qin General Bai Qi is the most famous killer devil during the warring states period. Before the battle of Changping where he killed 400,000 Zhao

soldiers, he had also executed almost 400,000 soldiers in the Wei army. This move is indeed very vicious, but extremely effective as well.

The 2 of them walked up the steps and the pretty palace maids knelt down in welcome. When they saw Shaolong, their eyes shone.

Lady Ya took him directly to the bedroom and said with a smile, "This is Ya'er's palace in here, the maids all belong to me. If Shaolong takes a liking to any of them, just instruct them to serve you. For you! No woman would do it unwillingly."

After Lady Ya instructed the palace maids to close the door, she started helping him remove his clothes and later removed her own as well, until they stood naked looking at one another. They hugged and collapsed onto the bed and she sighed, "38 years ago, ever since Wan Xian from Han and these 2 important blacksmith fell into the hands of the Qin, their weaponry gradually became better than the other states. That's why Imperial Brother places so much importance on this 'Lu Gong's Secret Manual' this time."

She continued softly, "Shaolong, in order to obtain the secret manual, Ya'er may have to sacrifice her body, will you allow me to do that?"

Xiang Shaolong said with a bitter smile, "Without my permission, would things be any different? Your weapon is your beautiful body, if you don't use your beauty is there anything else you can use instead?"

Lady Ya sighed, "If the price to pay is losing you, I'd rather not be able to take the secret manual. Ya'er is already extremely sick of wars. I only want to find

a quite place to stay with Shaolong, and stay away from this environment where everyone is fighting and killing. We'll just spend the rest of our lives in the forest."

Shaolong replied, "We'll talk later about whether you need to sleep with others. That's right! Why have I never heard you mention your own children?"

Lady Ya's expression darkened and she said, "I'm barren, if I have a child, maybe my life would not have been so promiscuous. Shaolong! Will you not love me because of this flaw?"

Xiang Shaolong replied immediately with action. This time Lady Ya was even more heated and compliant than the last time, which Xiang Shaolong thoroughly enjoyed. He understood why for someone like Prince Xinling who can have any beauty with a wave of his hands, he simply couldn't forget this excellent specimen.

After that they slept hugging each other for a while when the craftsmen Guo Zhong sent arrived. Xiang Shaolong spent more than 4 hours before they understood what they're supposed to make.

Looking at the sketch Xiang Shaolong drew, that craftsman looks totally lost.

Lady Ya saw him talking sensibly as he was explaining the drawings but when she asked him, Xiang Shaolong only smiled and did not reply.

He did not want to make formidable modern weapons, but only hope that he

can have a few equipment and tools that would be helpful for espionage and escape.

He still have to spend the next few days in the palace practicing his horsemanship, as that is his weakest point.

To be able to survive in this area and protect loved ones, the only way is to become stronger than others, and more vicious. There is no other way.

Chapter 7

Ladies of the forbidden palace

If it was the old Xiang Shaolong, once he meets a beauty, he'll try ways and means to get her and have some fun. But now beauties are aplenty, and extremely submissive as well. However, too much of anything is never good, and having too many women will increase his burden and worries as well. No one would be able to handle all these. Seeing the pretty maids look at him with thirst and desire, he only wants to find a quiet place to be alone. But in this era where even for a trip to the toilet, there'll be a pretty maid attending, it's even more difficult than ascending heaven to find a place without women. He's slowly coming to understand why women here can click so easily. The key point is in communication. In the modern era, they only need to exchange phone numbers and would be able to contact each other anytime. But in this ancient time, manual labor is needed to send letters, and it's only something available to people of a certain standing. After meeting once, they usually will not have the chance to meet again. That's why when the Baiyi lady Yiniang saw him, she ran after him to find an opportunity to have some fun. Or else their fate may just be the end. It's the same with these palace maids. It's not that Xiang Shaolong does not want to satisfy them, but one Lady Ya is more than enough for him to handle, so how can he help the other women?

When he was bathing in the luxurious bath, all the 8 palace maids in Lady Ya's palace came out in full force, all stripped naked to serve him in the pool and to massage his body. For someone so flirtatious like Xiang Shaolong, he

dared not overstep the boundaries this time, afraid that he will not be able to handle the outcome of the situation. The maids keep pouring boiling water into the pool and the hot steam rose, making the bathroom like an enclosed sauna. Chunying and the rest of the maids have helped him bath before, but they at least wore something, not like these palace maids who were totally undressed. Obviously life in the palace is a lot more licentious and ridiculous than the world outside.

But undeniably, Xiang Shaolong is thoroughly enjoying himself right now and totally relaxed. He's relieved that without his initiation, these 8 beautiful, heated women all dared not be overly enticing with him. But it's unavoidable that they are using the opportunity to use their bodies to bump and rub against him. The Zhao people has never seen someone with Xiang Shaolong's looks and physique.

After the bath, Xiang Shaolong laid on a bed next to the pool and allowed 8 pairs of dainty hands to apply fragrant oils on him and massage him, making him so comfortable he can't even keep his eyes open. With a life like this, what else can a man ask for.

Footsteps were heard, Lady Ya came next to the bed and helped him sit up, reaching out her hand to touch his dark and thick shoulder-length hair and said with a smile, "They are maids I chose specially from my residence, and all are smart, obedient and pretty. They, as well as me, will be serving you during the journey. Give them a little something to satisfy them! They will work even harder!" The faces of the 8 ladies blushed and they lowered their head and smiled shyly. Anyone could have seen that they are extremely willing, praying for it in fact. Xiang Shaolong almost wanted to give Lady Ya a

good smacking on her bottom. Maybe giving free reins to lust is a common and normal occurrence in the palace, but the military training he received has taught him the importance and need for self-control. He mumbled a reply and pretended to fall asleep. What else can he do? Lady Ya lowered her head and whispered in his ear, "You just have to lie down and enjoy, you don't even have to lift a finger." Xiang Shaolong secretly lamented that won't he become a sex toy for the 8 women instead. He could not accept this so he did not reply her and fell asleep after a while.

When he woke up, it was quiet. Lamps had been lighted in the bath and the surroundings were serene. He thought that all the women had left and was just getting up when a dainty voice cried out, "Master is awake!" 2 pretty maids immediately came over to help him dress. Xiang Shaolong saw the longing and hope on the 2 women's face and he asked, "What are elder sisters' names." The extremely voluptuous one giggled and said, "Master you are making us feel bad, I am Xiaozhao, she is Xiaomei, we're both Lady's personal maids." Xiaomei complimented, "Master has really good physique, we have never served any men who is more well built than you." By then Xiaozhao had came up to him to help him with the complicated buttons, her bosom heaving. Xiang Shaolong is after all used to flirting, so he can't help but touch her. Xiaozhao's body trembled and leaned softly on his body, crying softly, "Master!" Xiaomei plastered her body tightly against his back, her body temperature fiery hot.

Xiang Shaolong might as well hig the 2 women and after kissing them each on the mouth, asked, "Where is Lady?" The 2 women were frightened and hurriedly continued helping him dress. Xiaozhao said with fear, "I deserve death, Lady has ordered that we bring you to her as soon as you're awake."

Xiang Shaolong was ecstatic, knowing that for now he need not fear being harassed by them to make love, but since he's started, he might as well grope them a little more. Until they were moaning continuously did he follow them out.

Lady Ya was waiting for him quietly at the dining table and when she saw him, she knelt down on the rug and smiling sweetly, welcomed him to his seat like a wife serving her husband. They sat next to each other on one side of the table while the maids continuously served food and wine. Lady Ya poured wine for him and said with a laugh, "After living for so many years, this is the first time Ya'er feels the happiness of a sense of belonging. When I was sitting here waiting for you earlier, I don't feel that time passes terribly at all, there was not an instant of emptiness or boredom, because I know you are by my side."

Xiaozhao and the rest of the maids split into 2 groups and knelt on both sides of the entrance, 8 pairs of eyes kept glancing at Xiang Shaolong. After casting a look at the 8 women, Lady Ya said with a hidden smile, "Ya'er belongs to you! So they have also become your personal property, if you're interested, just have fun with them in front of Ya'er." She covered her mouth and continued, "Xiang Lang is not like other men at all, if it was someone else, Ya'er and the rest of them won't be so neatly dressed anymore." Xiang Shaolong laughed secretly to himself, when it comes to immorality, a modern man like him who is used to the binds of responsibility and rules really cannot be compared to them. But if he's had too much to drink, he won't know what he will do once he has loosened up under the influence of alcohol.

After Lady Ya waved the 8 maids away, she fell into his arms and said,

“Imperial brother and Lian Po both regards you highly, and this will surely incur Zhao Mu’s wrath. Especially he sent men over earlier to summon me but I rejected him sternly. This will certainly increase his hatred. Although you are of use to him now, he will not show his true colors so soon, but he will ultimately try to set a trap for you, and if anything happens, Imperial brother will certainly help him and not you.” Xiang Shaolong thought to himself that he will not let him off either. How can he when he thinks of Shu’er’s death. Lady Ya saw his expression darkened and thought that he was worried about Zhao Mu, so she said, “Zhao Mu has 2 lackeys under him, one is the physician Guo Kai, the other is General Le Cheng, one a scholar and one a warrior, but they are both formidable and devious people. They’re not in Handan right now, but if you meet them in future, you must deal with them carefully.”

Xiang Shaolong remembered Emperor Qin and hurried ask, “What is the heir of the state of Qin, Ying Zheng like?” Lady Ya looked unhappy and said coldly, “This person is good looking, and taller and bigger than the average Qin person, but he’s as timid as a mouse, afraid of everything. It’ll be difficult for him to have any great accomplishments, and he only knows how to enjoy himself with women all day.” Xiang Shaolong exclaimed hoarsely, “What? How can he be such a person?” Lady Ya straightened up and asked curiously, “Why do you seem to be so interested in him?” Xiang Shaolong’s mind was in a mess, Emperor Qin has always been his hope and dream. No matter what, he is still a soldier loyal to his country, so naturally he felt loyalty towards this great conqueror who created China with his hands. But if Emperor Qin is a person who is only interested in women and will not have much accomplishment, won’t he have lost his only hope and goal.

But history would not be so ridiculously wrong. It must be because Emperor Qin is trying to lie to the Zhaos and pretended to be like that. Yes! That must be it. Once he thought of this explanation, he relaxed and replied, "The state of Qin is so strong now, that's why I am especially interested in them!" Lady Ya's suspicions were not aroused and said, "The Qins are the most barbaric. Only they can murder thousands of soldiers, and treat women ruthlessly and raped them, so everyone is afraid once they hear the Qin soldiers are coming. They would rather die than end up in their hands."

Xiang Shaolong can't help but ask, "Is Ying Zheng strong physically?" Lady Ya reached out and touched his broad chest and said with a flirtatious smile, "He's a long shot away compared to you. If someone were to tell me that he just died, I would not be surprised at all. For someone like him who keeps having fun with women all the time, it's a miracle he can survive until now. He starts panting after climbing just a few steps of stairs." She continued with a sigh, "But the blame is not entirely his, firstly his mother Zhao Ji dotes on him overly. The worst thing is that Zhao Mu and his men deliberately lured him into indulging in wine and women, teaching him to drink and be merry at the age of 11, and kept on sending him beauties from the various states. How can an innocent child resist all these." This time Xiang Shaolong was really dumbfounded. Something like health can never be faked. Could it be that history is wrong, Ying Zheng is not Emperor Qin.

Because of this his mood was greatly affected. He drank from Lady Ya's hands 3 cups of strong wine successively, and also made Lady Ya drink a few cups. Lady Ya could not handle the stimulation of the alcohol and started to flirt. Xiang Shaolong's mind is in a mess, so he can only use excitement to numb himself. He summoned the 8 ladies in and made all of them drink and be

merry. He finally learnt what the royalty in Zhao did, and spent the most outrageous night, until he can't even remember who he had intercourse with. Without Emperor Qin, would he have to stay like this in Zhao forever. Even if he can handle the conniving Zhao Mu's traps, he'd still be killed by the Qin soldiers sooner or later! Since he obviously knows his future will be thus, how can he be happy today? At this point in time he glimpsed a little understanding as to why the royalty of the various states are wasting their lives like there's tomorrow. Because no one knows if they will still have all their possessions tomorrow.

When he woke up the next day, he was energetic and lively, making Lady Ya and the other ladies who still needed their rest surprised at him. Xiang Shaolong secretly reprimanded himself for being so outrageous. He decided not to think about Emperor Qin first. After washing up, he went to one of the practice fields in the palace to train on his horse riding and archery. The other imperial soldiers were all in awe of him and were respectful. Of course, they wouldn't dare to show it even if they're unhappy with him, because everyone knows that he is now a popular person with the King of Zhao. His immediate superior, the Chief of Imperial Guards Zhao Fang came personally to bring him around the palace, explaining the rules and things to note, saying "Our job is mainly to be responsible for the safety of the interior and exterior of the 2 palaces. The outer palace has 4 halls, 9 buildings and 10 pavilions, it's where his majesty receive his officials and work. The inner palace is separated into 3 portions, the main palace is the residence of his majesty and his concubines, the western palace is used to receive foreign emissaries while the eastern palace is the residence of the royalty. For now Shaolong can take a walk around, once you're familiar with the surroundings, I will further explain to you the roles and responsibilities." Xiang Shaolong knows that he

is not aware that he'll be leaving on a trip soon, but did not correct him. Right at this time the internal officer Ji Guang came to look for him and took him away to try on the armor made for him.

The armor is mainly to protect the chest and back, with belts intertwined at the shoulders, back and waist. It has a cape that looks like wings behind, and after he wore it everyone's eyes gleamed. It's the first time they have seen a person like him who looks like a heavenly warrior. The 10 over female workers in the armor room stared at him. Xiang Shaolong is already used to being stared at by women, and secretly laughed to himself that in the past, he was the one looking at women but now it's women who are looking at him. This should be considered the world is changing, changing from the modern to the ancient era. He wore the helmet, on its tip there are 2 pieces of half curved armor joined together to become a round shaped top, followed by a rectangular armor with rounded edges weaved from the top, and there's altogether 7 layers, the top layer pressing on the bottom layer. The shape of the armor protecting the forehead is more unique, fitting the shape of the face. The armor piece right in the middle of the forehead stretched straight down, protecting the protruding part between the brows. Maybe they're afraid of being beheaded from the back, so the protection at the back of the neck is stronger. After wearing this imperial protector's uniform, he thought it was fun and hurriedly walked out to patrol the area.

Another warrior of the same rank Cheng Xu volunteered himself to walk with him. They came to the building at the entrance of the main palace and after introducing Xiang Shaolong to the 10 odd guards there, he pulled him aside and said, "We're all brothers now, there are some things I must tell you. Never go into the main palace alone, the more people accompanying you the

better." Xiang Shaolong was surprised and pressed for the reason.

Cheng Wei whispered, "Besides the servants in the main palace, the number of concubines and maids exceed 500, and they can be capable of anything when they're bored. A robust and muscular man like you, they would not let you out once they see you, and that is no laughing matter." Xiang Shaolong heaved a breath of relief, so that's what it's all about. He furrowed his brows and asked, "His Majesty does not bother about such matters?" Cheng Wei smiled bitterly with a hidden meaning, "His Majesty doesn't even have time to bother with his own concubines, he won't even bother about these matters. It's better if one has family in the city, they can use the excuse of going home for a visit and take the opportunity to find someone for some fun. But ladies sent by other states are not even allowed to step out of the palace gates, so once they see men they will devour them."

Naturally Xiang Shaolong understands his meaning, the King of Zhao is not interested in women at all. He remembered Lady Ya's 8 maids, and thought that they may be considered very gentle and refined. After chatting a little longer, he slipped back into Lady Ya's palace. He'd just stepped into the boundaries of the eastern palace when 2 pretty palace maids ran after him, and kneeling down, said, "We have been waiting for Imperial Protector for more than half a day, Lady Ni would like to seek the audience of Imperial Protector." Xiang Shaolong was in a fix, although Cheng Wei had warned him, he thought that the only dangerous area is the main palace, but he did not expect that the eastern palace is not a safe place either. He hardened his heart and said, "Hai! Please convey my apologies to Lady Ni, I have something important and am in a hurry to meet Lady Ya..." He walked as he spoke and hurriedly escaped. The 2 palace maids wanted to run after him but

he is already a long distance away. Naturally on the way he met quite a few royal ladies, and seeing their flirtatious look, Xiang Shaolong was so frightened that he kept his eyes straight. Only when he reached the boundaries of Lady Ya's palace did he heave a sigh of relief.

He had just stepped into the hall when he was received by 2 of the pretty maids who helped him remove his armor. Xiang Shaolong forgot their names and asked, "What are elder sisters' names?" The 2 women had fun with him the whole of last night and knows that he's an easy-going person. One of them rolled her eyes at him and pouted, "Master only remembers Xiaozhao and Xiaomei, I've already given you my body and yet you do not remember my name." Xiang Shaolong thought to himself that he's not even sure if he had any intercourse with her, so how could he possibly remember her name. He reached out his hand and patted her plumb bottom, asking with a laugh, "Satisfied last night?" The 2 girls nodded their heads shyly. Xiang Shaolong was ecstatic, secretly thinking that maybe in his muddle headed state he broke Tao Fang's record of 7 women, and thought that he's really quite good. It's just that he never had the chance to try in the past!

The other woman replied, "She's Xiaozi, I'm Xiaoyu, Master do not forget." After Xiang Shaolong repeated their names twice, he asked, "Where is Lady?" Xiaoyu replied, "Lady is personally cooking for Master." Xiaozi smiled, "We've served Lady for so many years, it's the first time we saw her do this." Xiang Shaolong thought that the food she comes out with would surely taste horrible. But he was touched, and when he thought of his wife and maids in the Wu family, he missed them. While he had women to accompany him here, they are all alone in an empty room, which is really unfair. Xiaoyu lowered her voice and said, "Third Princess came to visit Lady, she's in the

kitchen now as well. Besides Lady Ya, she's the prettiest in the palace." Xiang Shaolong was stunned. These palace ladies would really do anything for a man, and she actually came here to look for him.

He had no choice but to follow the 2 maids into the kitchen. He had just walked into the inner hall when Lady Ya and another beauty dressed in palace robes came out from the kitchen and came face to face with him. Xiang Shaolong's eyes met with that beauty who cannot be any older than 17, and both pairs of eyes shone at the same time. This Third Princess looks very regal and dainty. Although she does not have Lady Ya's devilish body, but she's well proportioned and her movements graceful, like a precious flower, emitting an enchanting air amidst her quietness. When she saw Xiang Shaolong, she revealed a pretty smile, her expressive eyes seems to be greeting him. The sleeves of her clothes are very wide, dragging onto the ground, an exquisite and large shawl hung on her shoulders. Her hairstyle was exquisite and unique, with 2 string of flowers made from pearls and silk hanging down the side of her hair, making her look especially dainty and exquisite. A curved comb decorated the front of her hair, with 3 hairpieces on both her left and right sides, and in the middle of her forehead she dotted a red beauty spot.

What made Xiang Shaolong's eyes brighten is that she's not the **** he expected her to be. She was lively and sharp, with a captivating untainted, regal air about her. Standing next to the extremely beautiful Lady Ya, they look like the spring orchid and autumn chrysanthemum, each having its strong points. When she noticed Xiang Shaolong staring at her, her pretty face blushed and she lowered her head, but there was no look of unhappiness at all. The healthy fragrance of a young woman wafted into his

nose and Xiang Shaolong can't help but take a deep breath.

After Lady Ya rolled her eyes at him, she introduced the two of them. Xiang Shaolong hurriedly paid his respects to this royalty. After Lady Ya invited Third Princess into the inner hall for a seat, she pulled Xiang Shaolong aside and whispered, "No matter how interested Zhao Qian seems to be in you, you must not destroy her virtue. Because this time she will follow the group and marry into the state of Wei to become the first wife of the Crown Prince. If the Weis find out that she's not intact, they will reject her and you'll be in great trouble then." Xiang Shaolong felt that it's really a pity. It doesn't matter how many beauties he's had, he still felt that this is an earth shattering pity. Lady Ya accompanied Xiang Shaolong into the hall and the Third Princess stood up, and avoiding Xiang Shaolong's eyes, said quietly, "Lady, Zhao Qian is going back." Xiang Shaolong thought to himself, it's good that they meet less as well, or else it'd be terrible if they can't bear with each other. This Zhao Qian gives one the feeling of being quiet but with good upbringing and inner beauty.

Lady Ya did not try to keep her, but just sent her straight to the door. When she returned she said with a smile, "Xiang Lang's charm is really irresistible to us women, even Zhao Qian is not spared and she quickly ran away because of this. I really want to see if you have the ability to deal with the most famous beauty in Wei, Shi Cainu. (Shi = stone/ rock, Cainu = talented woman)." Xiang Shaolong was perplexed, "Shi Cainu?" Lady Ya pulled him to the seat and leaned over, putting her arms around his neck and said coquettishly, "Don't think that her family name is Shi. It's just that she's extremely talented, having shocked the scholarly world at the age of 16. Although her beauty is enough to fell a country, but she's never impressed with any men. She's 20

this year yet she refuses to marry. She has rejected all the famous young masters seeking her favor from the various states. That's why it's rumored that she is a stone woman borne from heaven, and will not fall for any man." The more difficult it is to obtain an item, the more precious it becomes, this has always been the case since ancient times. Xiang Shaolong's interest was piqued and he asked, "Even if she's unwilling to marry, but can she decide on this matter?"

Lady Ya laughed, "Tempted? She and the famous Qin beauty Widow Qing each have their ways. They're famous for being able to maintain their chastity. Shi Cainu was able to keep herself safe because no one can be compared to her zither and scholarly skills, anyone who sees her will feel inferior. That's why the King of Wei and Prince Xinling protects her, with these 2 huge mountains backing her, who would dare to force their way." She continued with a smile, "Xiang Lang's writing skills is unparalleled in the world, maybe you'll have a chance to move her." Xiang Shaolong secretly lamented his guilt and changed the topic, telling her about Lady Ni's intention to meet him.

Lady Ya was stunned and sat up straight, looking at him unbelievably and said, "She will look for a man as well?" Xiang Shaolong said with embarrassment, "Or maybe I misunderstood her intentions." Lady Ya replied, "How can this be a misunderstanding. I think that this beauty after having kept herself chaste for her husband for 9 years, is finally feeling restless. Hai! It's all your fault. You were so manly the other day at the duel, who would not fall for you. It's just unimaginable that for someone so cultivated like Lady Ni, is no exception as well. She's also the only one who will be bold enough to fight with me for you, because she is Imperial Brother's most

respected cousin, and I am her most favored sister.” She added with a coquettish smile, “Do you need me to help you spend a night with her, or maybe the both of us will accompany you?” Xiang Shaolong shook his head guardedly, “I don’t even know if she’s tall, short, fat or thin, what if you lied to me out of love and respect for her, then won’t I become a free gigolo.” Lady Ya was not familiar with his modern words ‘free gigolo’, and after thinking for a while, she chortled, leaning on his shoulder and panting, said “Ai! My imperial protector, how can I dare to lie to you? Won’t I be afraid of being reprimanded? Do you want me to take you there and check the goods out first? I also want to see her when she abandons her troubles.”

Xiang Shaolong felt this was very inappropriate and said seriously, “Don’t be ridiculous, if you make use of me to make Lady Li embarrassed, I will not let you off.” Lady Ya sat up straight and said aggrievedly, “I just wanted you to have more opportunities for fun before you leave for Wei!” Xiang Shaolong reached out and embraced her shoulder, giving her a very flirtatious and long kiss, and when Lady Ya totally melted, he said gently, “Don’t think that I am the same as other men, who will not be happy without beauties. I need to conserve my energy to do a good job for the journey to Wei, understand?” Lady Ya has become all languid from his kisses, and she mumbled her agreement while still lost in her senses. She snuggled into his arms, lying on his muscular chest. Right at this time Xiaozhao came to report that someone from the Wu family is looking for him. Xiang Shaolong stood up and Lady Ya immediately sat up and said, “I’m sorry, but I have been ordered by Imperial brother that I must listen in at the side.” She added with a smile, “But of course I will not reveal anything!”

Xiang Shaolong shrugged his shoulders, showing that he couldn’t care less.

That beautiful move was enough to make Lady Ya and Xiaozhao's eyes gleam, before they walked out. In actual fact his speech and movements are very different from the people of this era, and this gave him exceptional charm and debonair. It's not a coincidence that the more handsome Lian Jin would actually lose to him so badly in the battle of love. He had just stepped into the hall when a fiery ball accompanied by a sweet fragrance ran into his arms and started crying. Of course it is the Wu family's beauty Miss Tingfang.

Tao Fang stood in the middle of the hall and made a helpless action. There were 2 other warriors who were carrying his wooden sword and clothes. Lady Ya came next to the helpless Xiang Shaolong, reached out her hand to caress Wu Tingfang's pretty hair, went to her ear and whispered something. These words are more effective than any miracle pills to stop crying. Wu Tingfang immediately stopped her wails and lifted her pretty face to Xiang Shaolong, her teary eyes looking at Lady Ya and exclaimed, "Really!" Lady Ya nodded her head, and holding this pretty and dainty thing, took her into the inner hall. Of course Xiang Shaolong has no idea what Lady Ya said, but he guessed that in order to live in harmony in future, Zhao Ya will naturally try to stay on Wu Tingfang's good side. Anyone will know that if there are jealous fights, he will definitely stand on Wu Tingfang's side.

Tao Fang instructed the warriors to put down the wooden sword and clothes and to leave the room. He gave Xiang Shaolong a questioning look and Xiang Shaolong hurriedly told him about his trip to Wei. Tao Fang's brows furrowed deeply when he heard that and said softly, "Prince Xinling is exceptionally smart and has countless able men under him, he's not someone easy to deal with. You have to be careful." He paused and continued, "We have our own people in Wei as well, I'll go back and make some arrangements to see how

we can help you.” After they’ve agreed on the secret signal for the meeting, Lady Ya and a happy Wu Tingfang came out. Wu Tingfang waid with a smile, “Master Tao can go back on your own, and tell Sister Ting not to worry. Fang’er will stay here and take care of Xiang Lang.” It was as if a huge load was taken off his shoulder and after thanking Lady Ya, Tao Fang left happily. Obviously Wu Tingfang had been harassing him. Xiang Shaolong’s mood was greatly improved, naturally that night they were all engaged in loving acts, sandwiched between the 2 beauties Xhao Ya and Wu Tingfang, spending the warm and beautiful night together.

The next morning, with the help of Xiaozhao, he changed into his armor and helmet and went to the practice fields in high spirits to practice his horse riding and archery. The other imperial guards treated him like their new heroic idol, and because he has no airs about him, he’s on good relations with everyone. While he was galloping on his horse and he managed to shoot at the bull’s eyes at the same time, the field erupted in cheers. Suddenly everyone knelt down and when Xiang Shaolong looked, he hurriedly scrambled off his horse and knelt down as well. It turns out that the King of Zhao is here, and next to him was a pretty young lady, with eyebrows like the spring mountains and eyes like autumn’s water, clear and bright. However her composure was regal, with a noble air around her that will not tolerate any audacity. She is certainly different from Lady Ya’s flirtatious nature. After the King of Zhao supervised the men with their training, he summoned Xiang Shaolong and said happily, “Shaolong is practicing so diligently, I am much assured.”

Xiang Shaolong thought to himself that he’s practicing so hard not because of you, but because his own life is at stake, but of course he won’t say that out.

The King of Zhao said, "Come! Pay your respects to Lady Ni! She has a request to make of you!" Xiang Shaolong hurriedly paid his respects to Lady Ni, and by now he realizes that he has really misunderstood her. Such a regal lady, how can she possibly try to lure men publicly? The King of Zhao added, "Lady Ni told me that Shaolong had rejected her invitation once. Initially I was unhappy when I heard it, but I later guessed that Shaolong may have misunderstood Lady's meaning, and thought it's regarding matters between men and women. There's no guilt in being ignorant, and I can see that for the sake of the mission, Shaolong is controlling yourself very well. Therefore not only will I not blame you, but I am very impressed with you." Xiang Shaolong secretly felt guilty and thought to himself that if he'd known that he rejected Lady Ni's invitation because his stamina is limited and he could not handle so many beauties, and also he does not know if Lady Ni is pretty or if her figure is good, would he still think the same. But on the surface he naturally sought forgiveness fearfully. The King of Zhao smiled at Lady Ni and said, "I'll hand Shaolong over to you for now!" And he left with the accompaniment of the imperial guards.

Xiang Shaolong turned towards Lady Ni and she happened to be eyeing him. Their eyes locked and Lady Ni's pretty face blushed and she lowered her eyes and said gently, "Zhao Ni was rash, causing Mister to have the misunderstanding." Xiang Shaolong saw that her skin was smooth and clear, and although she's not as pretty as Zhao Ya, not as dainty as Wu Tingfang and not as fresh as Third Princess Zhao Qian, but she has another kind of alluring beauty catches one's attention. And at this time he almost wished that it was not a misunderstanding. Lady Ni said, "There's too many people here, would Mister please come to Zhao Ni's residence for a chat, and meet my son."

Xiang Shaolong thought that this matter must certainly involve her son. All the women in this era marry early, for all you know Lady Ni got married when she was 13 or 14, so although she looks like in her 20s, it's nothing strange if she has a 10 year old son. A horse carriage came over and Lady No went into the carriage. Xiang Shaolong is aware of the difference in status so he went up his horse and followed behind the carriage. In a short while they reached the place where the 2 palace maids waited the other day to invite him. The carriage turned into a courtyard. They sat down in the hall while 4 maids served them. Lady Ni was a little distracted and after drinking a few sips of hot tea did she dared to look at him. She said quietly, "I've invited Mister here today because I have a request." Xiang Shaolong saw that she dared not address him by his official title, but addressed him respectfully as Mister, and had already made his guess. He looked at her pretty eyes and asked with a smile, "Has it got something to do with Little Master?" Lady Ni sighed, "It's all because of this son. After my late husband perished in battle, all my hopes have been placed on him, but he's stubborn by nature and does not know how to take care of himself, only interested in having fun all the time..."

Xiang Shaolong smiled, "Don't all children like to play?" Lady Ni's face blushed and she said worriedly, "He does not play a typical child's games, but has fun with the girls in the Palace." Xiang Shaolong asked hoarsely, "How old is he?" Lady Ni said embarrassingly, "He'll be 14 end of the year." Looking at the dumbstruck Xiang Shaolong, she said helplessly, "I have found him many famous teachers to teach him, but none can do anything to him. He'll disappear in the blink of an eye. He's only a little afraid of me, but all the servants around me are afraid of him, he... Hai! I don't know what to say. Ai! The tea has turned cold."

Xiang Shaolong was about to drink tea when a woman's scream could be

heard coming from the backyard. Lady Ni's expression turned somber and she stood up and walked hurriedly towards the direction of the sound. Xiang Shaolong was afraid that she'll be in danger and hurriedly went after her. He had just stepped into the room when he saw a stout looking boy pressing a pretty maid against the wall, her top pulled down, revealing her voluptuous chest. That boy was holding onto her hands tightly, his tiny mouth biting and sucking on her right breast, not caring if there are other people nearby. Although there were 3 maids at the side, no one dared to stop him. Lady Ni was furious and shouted, "Beast! Stop your hands right now!" Xiang Shaolong thought to himself that it's more accurate say stop his mouth. That Little Master was shocked and released the pretty maid. He turned around and said nonchalantly, "Didn't Mother went to look for his Majesty? It was Young Prince who told me." After he spoke he turned his gaze to Xiang Shaolong, his look full of jeer and disrespect. The pretty maid went away crying with her clothes in disarray. Lady Ni was so furious she was speechless.

Xiang Shaolong wondered why she was able to hold back her tears. At the same time he realized that this kid learned martial arts since young and is strong. He's also on good terms with the Zhao prince, so naturally he does not fear anyone, and no one can or dares to discipline him. At such a young age and already he's stained with the lecherous nature of the palace, what a pity. The Little Master looked at Xiang Shaolong from the corner of his eye and huffed, "So you are that Xiang Shaolong, why aren't you kneeling upon seeing me." Lady Ni roared, "Outrageous! From today onwards Mister Xiang will be your teacher, you should be the one kneeling." The Little Master chortled and said, "This is where Mother is wrong, how can the formalities between a ruler and a subject be dismissed. After he's paid his respects, I still have to see how capable he is before I decide if I want him to teach me."

Lady Ni was so furious she stamped her feet and was about to berate him when Xiang Shaolong said with a smile, "Lady please do not be upset, why don't all of you leave for a moment and let me have some heart to heart talk with Little Master."

The Little Master saw that Xiang Shaolong was all decked out in his armor and looked imposing and actually felt a little afraid. He smiled icily and said, "Who wants to talk to you." He turned around and wanted to slip away from the back door, ignoring even Lady Ni's calls. He was about to slip out when there was a gust of wind and the Little Master felt a coldness brush past his ear, a dagger flew past his cheek and embedded itself on the doorframe. Little Master's legs weakened and he stopped. Lady Ni and the rest of the maids were all startled, their hands covering their mouths, thinking that if the dagger is a little way off, what would be the outcome? Little Master turned around pale faced, pointing at Xiang Shaolong and stammered, "Mother! He wants to kill me, apprehend him quickly." Xiang Shaolong stared icily at him and said coldly, "What kind of capability is that, shut up immediately. When I come tomorrow morning and I don't see you waiting at the study obediently, I'll find you and give you a good thrashing no matter where you hide. Now go!" Little Master was so furious his face paled. He stamped his feet angrily and pointed at him hatefully, saying, "Fine! We shall see!" He turned around and went out the back door in the blink of an eye.

Xiang Shaolong is not bothered about a little lad like him at all, and took the opportunity to bid his farewell to Lady Ni. Lady No lowered her head and said quietly, "You have not drank that tea!" Xiang Shaolong thought to himself if the beauty is tempted. He smiled suavely and went to the door to retrieve the dagger Tao Fang gave him. He had an idea. When it comes to archery,

there are a lot of people who are better than him, but what about flying daggers? There's no one better than him. But it's not convenient to carry daggers, but if he were to use the 5 inch steel nails he had used while in the special task force, he can easily carry a few hundred with him and it's even more deadly. He made up his mind and decided to ask Guo Zhong's men to make it immediately. He turned around and Lady Ni had just walked up behind him. The two came face to face in close distance, their eyes locked. Lady Ni uttered in alarm and moved 2 steps back, a little helpless. The most alluring thing to a man is when a chaste and mature beauty first feel the stirrings of her feelings. Xiang Shaolong is no exception, if not for the fact that there are other maids around, he'll certainly flirt with her. But it's not because he is deviously trying to lure her into bed, but he just wants to see her alluring, helpless look.

Lady Ni said, "Mister, this way!" Xiang Shaolong followed her back to the front hall and after drinking the hot tea that she personally changed for him, bid his farewell again. Lady Ni felt a real respect for him. All the men she's ever met, besides close blood relatives like the King, all of them had designs on her once they see her. On one hand they love her beautiful body, and on the other hand they want to boast that they were able to conquer this chaste widow. She detests those lecherous faces, and only this heroic looking man in front of her cannot make her feel any loathing at all. The way he threw that dagger earlier, full of confidence and strength, is enough to touch her calm heart who has been sick of the opposite sex for so long. Lady Ni can find no further excuse to retain him, and she personally sent him to the door, looking at him deeply and lightly sighed, "Mister please remember to come here early tomorrow, I will leave my little Pan'er to you." Xiang Shaolong almost blurted out, "What about you?" but of course he dared not be so rude. He

gave a small smile and said, “The way I teach children will not be like what you imagine, I hope Lady will be able to accept that, or you may fire me from my post any time.” Lady Ni said gladly, “As long as it’s Mister’s methods, I will accept them all. Ai! I was too anxious, and forgot to ask you the question about salary.” Xiang Shaolong chortled and walked out the door, his voice drifting back, “I’m doing this because of a mother’s love for her son, that would be my reward.”

Chapter 8

The Empress of Zhao

When he returned to the Palace, Wu Tingfang was overjoyed and after grumbling for a bit, she dragged him to the pavilion in the garden for some sweet talk.

A moment later Lady Ya returned with a shocking news. King Xiaowen of Qin who has ascended the throne for less than 3 days suddenly died, and Ying Zheng's father has taken over the throne as King Zhuangxiang.

Lady Ya said, "King Xiaowen is 53 years old this year, and has always been weak, but this time he died after eating the medicine offered by Lu Buwei, so everyone suspects that Lu Buwei has secretly done something. But because of the relationship between King Zhuangxiang and Lu Buwei, no one dares to say anything although they're upset. Ha! This Lu Buwei is extremely ambitious, and his methods vicious and excellent. Now all the other states are afraid that the Qin army will start to invade east very quickly."

Xiang Shaolong was surprised and overjoyed at the news, and thought that the events are really similar to what was depicted in the movie. However he knows that the most important task for Lu Buwei now is not to attack the other 6 states, but to find a way to get his precious son Yingzheng back to Xianyang, then think of a way to murder King Zhuangxiang. In that way the throne will fall into the hands of his son, and he will become in a sense the Grand Emperor.

Lady Ya continued, “Lu Buwei has been a merchant for many years and traveled among the states, so he’s very familiar with the situation in all the states. If he were to come to power, the outcome will be terrible. Merchants only care about gains and not loyalty, and are not bounded by loyalty. The thought of a person like that governing the expansion is enough to make one’s blood run cold.”

Xiang Shaolong was thinking about Yingzheng instead. All along, historians did not understand that when his father Yiren and Lu Buwei escaped Handan, they left behind Zhaoji and Yingzheng to avoid arousing suspicions, but why didn’t that Zhao kill Yingzheng and his mother to appease their anger.

Now he understood, that is Zhao Mu’s ploy, deliberately thinning Yingzheng’s mind with wine and beauty, making him a useless person. They can then use him to make deals with the Qin in future, and even if he becomes the King, a useless person like him will be more bane than boon to the Qins. Killing 2 birds with one stone, the ploy is indeed vicious. It seems that Zhao Mu has now succeeded, so how can Emperor Qin unify the 6 states then?

He really has no idea.

But if he does not see Emperor Qin, he will never give up.

It’s not difficult to imagine that now that Yiren has ascended the throne to become the Qin King, the value of Yingzheng who is now the crown prince will rise. Now that he’s a rare treasure, the Zhaos will certainly guard him even more closely, so how can he possibly meet him without arousing others’ suspicions?

Wu Tingfang came up to him and asked, “What is Xiang Lang thinking about?”

Xiang Shaolong was jolted awake and on seeing Lady Ya’s heated eyes staring at him, he changed the subject and asked, “Who is the Premier in Qin now? What’s the situation like?”

Lady Ya sighed, “It doesn’t matter who is in power, the position of Premier will end up in Lu Buwei’s hands sooner or later.”

Wu Tingfang asked curiously, “Why is Sister Ya so afraid of the Qins?”

Lady Ya replied helplessly, “It’s not that I’m afraid of them, but there’s no one who is not afraid of them. You can see clearly from our state, who is not engaged in amorous acts, wine and beauty. When the enemy soldiers are nearing the city, they’ll pull themselves together for a while and once the enemy is defeated, they’ll return to their old ways. However the Qins still maintain the hard working nature of the barbarians and were not influenced by the ways of the southern people. Shangyang advised the Qins to prohibit philosophy books and the country will then prosper and strengthen. Although I do not know who is right or wrong, but seeing the Qins growing stronger day by day, who can say that it’s wrong of the Qins to prohibit philosophy books.”

Only now did Xiang Shaolong realize that before Emperor Qin burned books and buried Confucian scholars, Shangyang has already done this long ago, burning the books first.

Lady Ya added, "Before Fan Ju became the premier, the main power in Qin was in the hands of the Marquis of Rang, and those in power were people under him. He used the strategy of attacking the far away states but maintaining friendship with nearby states, thus making the Qin's commanders frequently travel far away to fight battles, depleting the country's strength. King Zhaoxiang therefore made plans secretly with Fan Ju to take back military control, and changed the strategy to attacking the nearby states but maintaining friendship with far away states. They made peace with Qi and Chu, and used all their might to deal with Han and us, therefore the Changping battle happened. And Imperial brother made the wrong move as well, hai!"

Xiang Shaolong saw the look of sadness in her eyes, and knows that she is now thinking of the Zhao Gua who can only talk strategy and lost his life in Changping. He felt a great pity for her so he hugged and kissed her, saying gently, "Let bygones be bygones, don't think too much."

Zhao Ya leaned into his arms weakly, "After the Marquis of Rang lost his power, one of his great generals Bai Qi was never on good terms with Fan Ju. In the battle of Changping, Bai Qi destroyed 400,000 of our men, his methods were never more cruel. Therefore Fan Ju made a big issue out of this and in the end managed to convince the Qin King to execute Bai Qi's entire clan. This move resulted in the hatred of Qin's generals towards an outsider like Fan Ju, and finally it's now Cai Ze of Yan who is now the Premier. But Lu Buwei is riding on a high tide now, and the good days for Cai Ze will soon be over."

Xiang Shaolong felt his joy run dry on hearing this, and felt that the future is

bleak. In this era, everyone will murder if it can benefit himself. He hugged the 2 women and said, "Hai! Don't think anymore. We'll drink and be merry today, and leave all worries to tomorrow. Come! Let's go into the room immediately and have fun."

The 2 women's pretty eyes shone and they repeated, "Drink and be merry today, and leave all worries to tomorrow. Well said, Xiang Lang." They followed him obediently, their powdered face burning.

Xiang Shaolong secretly thought to himself, how can he be bothered about what's going to happen tomorrow? He only knows how to fight and knows nothing about politics, it's a silly dream if he wants to change this era. Why not have fun instead, enjoy each beauty as they come, that would be more practical. Who knows if he'll still be alive tomorrow, or if he'll still be in this era?

He can't help but think of the regal and elegant Zhao Ni.

Let's see if he'll have a chance to flirt with the lady tomorrow, that would certainly be a captivating experience and would not have put his journey here to waste.

As for whether he can still return to the 21st century, he doesn't really care anymore.

Xiang Shaolong woke up before the sun rose, changed into his military uniform but without wearing his armor, left for the practice field to practice his horse riding and archery.

From now on he's not going to think about the future, but only wants to spend his time enjoying life to the fullest.

The many years of habit made him like exercising, therefore his stamina is better than others. The amorous night he spent did not affect him much. Instead, if he doesn't exercise, he'll feel uncomfortable instead.

He humbly sought advice from the other imperial guards the various techniques of controlling a horse, therefore he improved by leaps and bounds. He was able to turn and flip at ease on horseback and execute various difficult moves. He also practiced hard on charging in battle. It's just that he's not too used to fighting a battle on a horse wearing heavy armor.

After a hard practice, he let Cheng Xu take him to the soldiers quarters assigned to him and after his shower, went to Lady Ni's residence. Just as he was thinking how he should flirt with this beauty when he suddenly heard someone calling him.

Xiang Shaolong looked over in surprise and saw Lady Ni's mischievous and lecherous son waving to him from a building on the left.

He obviously knows that it won't be anything good but he's not afraid at all and walked over with large strides.

The Little Master dashed into the building.

Xiang Shaolong secretly laughed to himself and heightened his senses. He had just stepped into the courtyard when there was a 'whoosh' and a huge

net dropped down from above.

Xiang Shaolong laughed and rolled forward, avoiding the net and jumped up as if nothing happened, tapping the dust and grass off his clothes.

In the spacious courtyard 10 odd people holding swords jumped out from their hiding place and surrounded him. Master Pan was hiding behind a bigger kid who was a head taller than him and shouted, "Beat him up!"

Xiang Shaolong took a look around and wanted to laugh. These 10 odd people were between the ages of 14 to 17, and looks like little bullies in the royal family, and they actually dared to gang up to deal with him.

The bigger kid who was shielding the Little Master could have been Zhao's crown prince, so how can he let him have a chance to reveal his status. He laughed and drew out his rainbow sword and went towards Master Pan.

2 swords hurriedly went up in defense.

Xiang Shaolong gave 2 heavy blows which stunned his opponents and their swords dropped to the ground, before giving them a kick on their butts. The 2 spoiled kids groaned as they fell to the ground.

Xiang Shaolong laughed as he waved his sword, slashing any sword that comes forward and kicking any butt that he sees and in a short while he defeated this royal gang. He pretended to roar and frightened this group of teenagers so much that they scattered away in fear.

Naturally he will not let Master Pan off and he flipped him over on the ground and using his sword, slapped his butt more than 10 times before lifting the wailing boy up and said icily, “If you cry one more time, I will give you 10 slaps.”

Master Pan has never seen someone so terrible and he immediately shut up.

Xiang Shaolong escorted him home. Lady Ni has long heard about what happened and was at the door waiting.

Once Master Pan sees his mother, he saw that he has backing and started crying again.

Lady Ni’s heart ached on seeing this and was about to console him when Xiang Shaolong said loudly, “Lady will either hand him over to me, or I will never interfere in future again.”

Lady Ni was startled and she lowered her head and said, “Of course I will hand him over to Mister!”

Xiang Shaolong smiled and said, “That would be best!” He lifted Master Pan by the scruff of his neck and dragged him into the study, keeping Lady Ni and the rest of the maids outside. He sat down on the soft cushion and grinned at Master Pan who was scrambling to get up from the floor with a look of absolute hatred.

Xiang Shaolong roared, “Sit down!”

Master Pan immediately sat down.

Xiang Shaolong said coldly, "Look! Look at you, you have no ability yourself so you went to look for help, thinking of bullying others by sheer numbers. And you cry and scream when you lose, what kind of a hero is that."

Master Pan gritted his teeth and said, "You're not a hero, the old bullying the young."

Xiang Shaolong humph, "If you're afraid of me, you won't come and find trouble with me on your own accord. You know this is not a question of the old bullying the young, but a question of who is stronger and who is weaker."

Master Pan was dumbfounded, he did not expect Xiang Shaolong to be so formidable. He thought for a moment before he tried to scare him by saying, "Just now you kicked Young Prince's butt, he will certainly tell his Majesty to chop off your head."

Xiang Shaolong sighed, "I see that you're so young and yet you know how to flirt with women, and I thought you're a person of standing. But I did not expect that when you lose to others, you only know how to use despicable methods. I was wrong about you, get lost! I do not want to see you ever again."

Master Pan eyed his suspiciously and got up. He turned around and was about to leave when he turned back again and asked, "Why is it that when I made fun of these women, you regard me as a person of standing?"

Xiang Shaolong replied nonchalantly, "Most men are lecherous, it doesn't matter if they're young or old. When I saw you molesting that sister the other day, you did seem to have a hand with you and I thought your other skills would be good as well. But I did not expect you to be so useless. If you have some spirit in you then you should practice hard to be more capable than me and defeat me properly."

It's the first time Master Pan hear an adult admiring his evil ways, so he nodded his head and said, "Just you see! One day I will defeat you."

Xiang Shaolong knows that he has successfully piqued his curiosity and thoughts of winning, so he said, "What's the use of just saying it, just scram! I abhor those useless people who only knows how to talk empty. I hope you never have the chance to go to battle, or else it'll not be something so simple as getting a kick on the butt."

Youths have always idolized heroes. Xiang Shaolong is good looking and easily defeated the powerful man in his eyes, so he has long harbored a respect and fear for Xiang Shaolong. Now that Xiang Shaolong's words sounded reasonable to his ears, he can't help but felt his enmity reduce and he sat back down and said, "If I listen to you, will you teach me how you fought earlier?"

Xiang Shaolong's eyes gleamed and he said, "Do you know how valuable my skills are, how can I just teach you just because of a word from your mother. If you want to learn, you'll have to pass a test first." He continued with a smile, "But if you're obedient, not only can I make you become Zhao's true hero and swordsman, I can also teach you how to become a love expert that

will charm all women to death. All the beauties in the world will be yours to pick."

Using both hard and soft tactics, Master Pan's face brightened. Ever since his father passed away, he's always envied others who has a father, and Xiang Shaolong just happen to fit into this emptiness. Naturally he did not realize it himself, but in his heart he actually thirst for someone like Xiang Shaolong to appear.

He was silent for a moment before he ventured to ask, "Really! What kind of test do I need to pass?"

Xiang Shaolong know that he cannot be slipshod about this matter, so he stood up and helped him up as well.

Just as Master Pan was surprised at the attention given to him, Xiang Shaolong lifted him up and flung him over his shoulder onto the rug, laughing loudly, "First is to get a beating. A person who cannot withstand a beating is not qualified to fight."

Although Master Pan was thrown onto the floor, but he only felt a slight pain and thought that this was fun, so he jumped up.

Xiang Shaolong taught him a few moves of Judo on how to wrestle, and allowed Master Pan to trip him, so his interest was aroused. After a round of wrestling fun, and truly like a child's character, he soon forgot all his hatred and enmity.

Xiang Shaolong tousled his head and said, “Go and look for some other people to try my methods! If you listen to instructions and are obedient, you’ll certainly become like me in future, tall and strong with extraordinary abilities.”

Master Pan shouted in joy and ran out the door.

Lady Ni who has been waiting outside the door all this while was dumbfounded; she cannot understand why her mischievous son would be so ecstatic?

She stepped into the study and looked dumbly at Xiang Shaolong, not knowing what to say at all.

Xiang Shaolong walked over and closed the door. He went behind her and said with a smile, “If I teach Little Master how to be close with women, what would Lady think?”

Lady Ni’s body shook and she turned around abruptly and asked hoarsely, “What?” She almost knocked into him, but she retreated, and this time it was only a small step back.

Xiang Shaolong said nonchalantly, “Children are all rebellious and curious. The more Lady tries to restrict him, the more he’ll want to break the rules. So if we let him know clearly what he is doing, what would be the consequences, what responsibility he’ll have to take, he’ll learn to control himself instead.”

Lady Ni stammered, “But he’s only 13!”

Xiang Shaolong asked, “How old was Lady when you got married?”

Lady Ni blushed and she lowered her gaze, “At that time I was only 14.”

Xiang Shaolong’s heart lurched and he said with a smile, “So! 13 is not considered too young, there are a lot of 15 year old males with wives and mistresses, and this is the case in the Palace as well. If Lady wants to stop him from getting close to women, it would be a very difficult task.”

Lady Ni said worriedly, “But I still keep thinking that he’s an immature kid. However Mister’s way of thinking is indeed astute and unique, I’ve never heard of anyone else who has such a thinking.”

Xiang Shaolong took the opportunity to look at her chest, waist and long limbs, thinking to himself that you’ll really know how unique a modern man like me is once you’re in bed.

Lady Ni was just stealing a peep at him and saw his heated eyes roving over her chest and was shocked, “Mister!”

Xiang Shaolong was embarrassed that she noticed his lecherous look and hurriedly took his leave.

Lady Ni wanted to retain him a little longer but she could find no excuse, so she can only send him out the door shyly.

Both of them were feeling guilty so they could feel that secret excitement although no words were spoken.

Xiang Shaolong returned to Lady Ya's place and was about to have fun with the ladies when the King of Zhao suddenly summoned him, so he left hurriedly.

The guard brought him straight to the inner Palace. Xiang Shaolong remembered Cheng Xu's warning and asked with furrowed brows, "Isn't his Majesty working at the Outer Palace?"

The guard was expressionless as he replied, "I am only following orders, and do not know anything else."

The 2 of them walked along the wide and long corridors in the palace, meeting ladies-in-waiting and concubines on the way and all of them were making eyes at Xiang Shaolong. All these ladies were specially chosen, so naturally they're all beauties.

They reached an especially magnificent palace building and after the guard passed him over to 2 servants, he left.

One of the servants instructed him to remove his sword and any other weapons before leading him into the hall.

He'd just stepped into the hall but Xiang Shaolong knows that something is wrong.

On both sides there were 10 strong, stout men standing. On a raised platform at the end of the hall, a lady with her hair piled high up, wearing a colorful and elegant robe was lounging on a chair covered with soft cushions, looking at him icily.

Sitting next to her was the young prince whose butt he just kicked this morning, and behind them sat 7 to 8 beauties who looked like concubines, and behind these ladies were 10 odd pretty ladies-in-waiting, but all of them looked unfriendly.

Looking at such a layout, naturally he knows what is happening. He hurriedly knelt down and kowtowed, “Imperial Protector Xiang Shaolong pays his respect to your Majesty.”

Empress Zhao does not look older than 30, and looked regal and imposing, with a high nose bridge, showing that she’s a person of steely character with a mind of her own.

Naturally she’s not as beautiful as Lady Ya, Lady Ni or Third Princess, but her posture while on the dais, especially her thick lips, looks very sexy.

With one look, Xiang Shaolong can hazard a guess about her character.

This kind of woman loves men who are stronger than her.

The young prince pointed at him and said with hatred, “Imperial Mother! He’s the one who kicked me.”

Empress Zhao's eyes turned icy and she lightly reprimanded, "You dare to offend even the prince, Xiang Shaolong do you know this is a death penalty."

Xiang Shaolong replied without fear, "I now know my mistake, but at that time I did not know that Young Prince were among the 10 odd people surrounding and attacking me. I was only under Lady Ni's orders to teach Master Pan well, and also to defend myself, so I made such a mistake. Would your Majesty please look into this further."

Obviously Empress Zhao has no idea what the whole thing was about and after staring at the Young Prince, she added coldly, "What actually happened? Tell me clearly from the beginning."

Therefore Xiang Shaolong truthfully related what happened right from the start, his voice full of confidence and persuasion, making Empress Zhao and all the concubines secretly discount what was originally told to them. When he spoke about how he taught Master Pan a lesson, he revealed a warm smile.

The Young Prince saw that the situation is amiss so he tugged Empress Zhao's sleeve and said, "Imperial Mother must help your son."

Empress Zhao furrowed her brows and asked, "What do you want?"

The Young Price went to her ear and whispered a few words.

Empress Zhao nodded her head slightly and raised her voice, "Stand up."

Xiang Shaolong stood to his full height proudly, and for a moment he looked even vetter than the 20 stout looking men, making the eyes of the Empress and the concubines all light up.

It's the first time they have seen a person of such capabilities.

Empress Zhao said gently to the Young Prince, "Imperial Mother can accede to your request, and let them give Xiang Shaolong a beating so that your anger can be appeased. But if they were to lose to him instead, you will have to be like Little Pan and follow Xiang Shaolong and learn martial arts and bearing from him, will you agree?"

She saw for herself how he defeated Lian Jin the other day and knows that he is highly skilled, and now that she knows he's a good disciplinarian, she was overjoyed and thus made this request.

The Young Prince asked happily, "Will they all strike at the same time?"

Empress Zhao furrowed her brows, "How can it be that unfair, isn't it enough for you to pick 3 of them out?"

The Young Prince was wary after the beating by Xiang Shaolong and he shook his head, "No! Not enough."

There was an uproar among the 20 stout men, all revealing looks of unhappiness and spoiling for a fight.

Xiang Shaolong bowed and said, "Since your Majesty has agreed to Young

Prince's request, Shaolong is willing to give a try."

Everyone in the hall gasped.

Xiang Shaolong was secretly laughing to himself, when it comes to freestyle fighting, he's not afraid no matter how many people there are. These men are naturally considered strongmen in this era, but they're a long way off if compared to Black Faced Deity.

The Young Prince exclaimed happily, "That's settled then, fight immediately." And secretly thought to himself that he'll surely be dead this time.

Xiang Shaolong removed his outer robe, revealing his wonderful physique, making the Empress and the ladies' hearts all beat faster and their eyes mesmerized.

The 20 men were furious at being belittled and they all shouted in unison as they removed their tops, revealing their exquisite upper bodies and came forward to surround Xiang Shaolong.

Xiang Shaolong have not had a good fight for a long time and is now in the mood for it. He followed them and removed his top as well, revealing his strong and chiseled body, and muscles with not an ounce of fat surrounding his broad chest and arms. The most impressive part is his six pack on his tummy.

Empress Zhao has always been ignored by the King and her heart was aflame on seeing this, and was speechless for a moment.

The Young Prince shouted, "Strike!"

4 men immediately pounced towards Xiang Shaolong, with 2 going to hug him from behind and the other 2 waving their fists to attack his temple and chest, and it seems that they are not pulling their punches at all.

The ladies all screamed in unison.

Xiang Shaolong suddenly retreated, his left and right elbows knocking into the 2 men coming up behind him.

The 2 men groaned and knelt down on the ground.

Xiang Shaolong pressed down on their shoulders and used the motion to propel himself into the air, his legs kicking out and striking the 2 men who were attacking from the front right in the face.

With blood flowing down their noses, the 2 men covered their faces and fell backwards.

In one instant he has dealt with 4 men.

The Young Price was extremely nervous and kept cheering for the others.

When Xiang Shaolong landed on the ground again, he rolled forward and his legs kicked up diagonally. The other 2 men has never seen such unorthodox way of fighting and they were immediately kicked on their stomachs and sent flying off, unable to get up.

When he jumped up, a man attacked him with both his fists but he forcefully pushed the fists aside and took the opportunity to give 2 punches to the man's chest. He turned around with a kick and the kick landed on another man's chest, sending the 2 of them flying off at the same time.

His fighting style is a combination of Thai boxing, karate, western boxing and Korea's judo, mixed with Chinese martial arts, the moves welded after serious analyzing and it's not something that the martial arts of this era can fight against. It uses very little strength to defeat almost half of his opponents and those who were stuck will lose their ability to fight.

The other men were startled and retreated.

The Young Prince was dumbfounded, looking at Xiang Shaolong who seems to be as mighty as a deity unbelievably.

Empress Zhao could not take it any longer and shouted, "Stop!"

The men all heaved a sigh of relief and helped the injured retreat.

Xiang Shaolong knelt down and said, "Would your Majesty please forgive me, Xiang Shaolong has been merciful in the fight, they'll be fine after a short rest."

The Young Prince was unhappy and pouted, "Imperial Mother!"

Empress Zhao stared at him and said, "It is your father and your good fortune that Great Zhao has such a marvelous warrior, what else do you want?"

The Young Price was cowered by Xiang Shaolong's air and for a moment was unable to speak. After a moment he stamped his feet and ran out of the hall.

Empress Zhao turned back towards Xiang Shaolong and her eyes gentle, said, "Imperial Protector please rise."

Xiang Shaolong stood up and bowed, saying, "If your Majesty does not have any other instructions, I will take my leave."

After Empress Zhao waved the rest of the men away, she stood up and walked down the dais and said apologetically, "Imperial Protector's clothes are all dirty!" And shouted, "Men, bring Imperial Protector to the back palace for a bath and change."

Xiang Shaolong was startled and thought that the situation is terrible, what difference is this from sending a goat to a tiger's den? Before the concubines and ladies in waiting have a chance to reach him, he swiftly scooped up his clothes and signaled the ladies to stop, and begged the Zhao Empress, "I will be going to the state of Wei the day after, now we're in a hurry to prepare for the trip, would your Majesty please forgive me."

The more the Empress sees him, the more she is taken with him, but on seeing him so determined, she did not want to stop him, thinking to herself that in future there will be the excuse to ask him to teach the Prince martial arts, so there'll be opportunities to see him. She smiled and said, "At least let them help you dress!"

The ladies in waiting all swarmed forward and were busy helping him dress while giggling, and of course they took the opportunity to touch him to their

heart's content.

The Empress and the concubines were all looking from the side with adoration in their expressions. However, Xiang Shaolong was worried, what if the King of Zhao were to find out about this, what would his reaction be?

He can't help but secretly lament.

Chapter 9

Flirting with the virtuous lady

He returned to Lady Ya's palace when Guo Zhong sent him the things he ordered. There were about a thousand pieces of flying needles, and the sight of it gave him a great boost. Lady Ya and Wu Tingfang were discussing the use of those strange things like springs, hooks etc, and when they saw him coming back, they immediately queried him. Xiang Shaolong hugged the 2 women and kissed and touched them until they were delirious and he totally avoided answering them. Suddenly a little esteemed guest arrived, and it's Master Pan, who was happily boasting to him how he managed to wrestle and fell a lot of people. But he added, "But they defeated me very soon again."

Xiang Shaolong asked him about the young prince's attitude. Master Pan said, "Master is really great, to have beaten that bunch of warriors. The Young Price might not admit it, but I can see that he is quite awed in his heart. Those who have not tasted your prowess and bravely wanted to seek you out but they were all rejected by Young Prince." Lady Ya laughed, "What? Your little gang of bullies have finally met your nemesis?" Master Pan looked at her lecherously, not at all giving way and said, "Isn't Aunt Ya conquered by Master as well?" Lady Ya was so furious that she stared at him with rounded eyes, and ignoring him, left with Wu Tingfang. Master Pan stared at Wu Tingfang's perky bottom and said appreciatively, "Sister Wu is really pretty, no one in the palace can be compared to her."

Xiang Shaolong secretly reprimanded him for being a little lecher, but if they were to exchange positions, he may not be any much better than him. It's simply too easy to obtain women here. He asked, "Lad! Tell me, have you done it with women?" Master Pan was excited as he replied honestly, "Of course, but I'm still a long way off compared to Master, even Aunt Ya has been conquered by you. I've long appointed you as the most attractive man in Zhao for women." He continued with a low voice, "Have you touched Mother?" Xiang Shaolong was stunned for a moment, this little imp is really difficult to handle, how can him impart to him the correct values? Master Pan lowered his voice and added, "I've just asked Mother, her face turned red and she chased me out, but I can tell that she secretly likes you." Xiang Shaolong did not know whether to be angry or to laugh, so he dragged him to the garden, forced him to do a few more exercises and taught him a few basics of the Mohist swordplay. Master Pan has already regarded him as his idol, and for once he was intent on practicing. It was only after dinner that Master Pan left, sad to part.

Xiang Shaolong had been working hard the whole day so he dragged the 2 ladies to the pool for some fun while the 8 maids helped them pour in hot water. This enjoyment like that of an emperor gave him a feeling of decadence. When he's having fun, who cares about so much. But nevertheless he is someone who will not be willingly controlled by fate, so after having his way with the 2 ladies, while still hugging them in the pool, he started asking Lady Ya about the situation in the various states. He asked, "Why is it that the other states know how formidable Qin is, but they do not unite against him? For example our trip to Wei this time, on the surface it's a peaceful trip but in actual fact there's something more sinister going on." Lady Ya replied, "If you don't stop caressing me, how do you expect me to

give you a proper answer?" Xiang Shaolong released his hand that was encompassing her well endowed bosom, kissed her face and said, "Speak then!" Wu Tingfang moaned, "Shaolong! Fang'er wants to listen as well!" Xiang Shaolong laughed and moved his hand to hug her slender waist instead and asked, "Will this do?" Wu Tingfang kissed him happily and hurriedly said, "Sister Ya speak quickly."

After spending these 2 days together, and with Lady Ya trying to get into her good books, these 2 ladies became as close as sisters. Lady Ya arranged the thoughts in her mind and sighed, "The main reason, I think is the problem of geography. For example the 2 states of Qi and Yan, are further away from Qin, so they do not feel the pain as acutely as us. Everyone knows that to become stronger, one has to expand the territory, that's why when the Yan saw us suffering a serious set back after Changping, they took the opportunity to invade. Who'd have the time to think about uniting against Qin." Xiang Shaolong nodded his head, "Ya'er's analysis is very reasonable, I'm sure the 6 states will be destroyed by the stronger Qin sooner or later, we should make plans earlier." The 2 ladies were silent and unconsciously came closer to him. Only that way can they feel a sense of security. In this era, losing a war means death to a warrior, and to women from the royal family it means losing their most basic dignity, and end up being worse than prostitutes, as playthings for men.

In the warm water, touching the 2 alluring bodies, Xiang Shaolong's mind began to wander, thinking about his extraordinary encounter. These few days he has not thought of which era he should belong to. All the relatives and friends are getting further and further away from him, separated by time that cannot be crossed. Something must have gone wrong with that Crazy Ma's

machine, and he will be classified as mysteriously missing. No one will bother about him, the forgetful people will soon forget him, leaving him alone with secrets that he cannot reveal to anyone, struggling to survive in this heartless warring states. He once had grand dreams as well, it was Yuan Zong's sacrifice that fired his valor, making him think of using Emperor Qin to conquer the world and create a unified society. But the real situation about Emperor Qin shattered his dream, and he now only wants to numb himself with wine and beauties, enjoying life to the fullest.

He's not willing to give himself up to despair just like that. But what can he do? If the trip to Wei is successful, he may face the prospect of losing his official post and his life upon his return because Zhao Mu will certainly not let him off. The King of Zhao may be treating him very nicely now, but those royalty never regarded their subordinates as 'humans'. There's no such concept as human rights in this era. What plans can he make? He can only take each step as it comes. Once he thought of this, Xiang Shaolong released the 2 ladies and pulled Xiaozhao, who was pouring in hot water for him, into the pool, and began his outrageous acts. Amidst the women's giggles, the pool bubbled with countless loving acts.

The next day Xiang Shaolong taught Master Pan the Mohist swordplay for a while, and after joking and talking with him, realized that this stubborn little boy is 4 to 5 years more mature than others his age, wild and rebellious yet strong and smart. For the first time Xiang Shaolong felt a liking towards him. Master Pan suddenly exclaimed earnestly, "Master! Will you marry my Mother? There are a lot of people who want to possess her inside and outside the palace, if someone I hate gets her, I'd rather kill myself." Xiang Shaolong looked at him in shock and said with surprise, "I didn't know that

you care for your Mother that much. But even if I have the intention of marrying your Mother, I'd still need his Majesty's approval. Firstly I have not made any significant contributions, secondly my position is lowly, so how can his Majesty agree. We'll talk about this at a later date!" Master Pan said dejectedly, "What shall Mother do than, I've never seen her look at another man the same way she looks at you."

What an astute kid. Xiang Shaolong reached out and tousled his hair and was about to speak when from the corner of his eyes, he saw the fresh looking Zhao Ni walking towards them, her fragrance already preludes her presence. She saw Xiang Shaolong touching Master Pan's head, and her own son looking so obedient, a feeling of happiness she has not felt since her husband died in battle welled up in her and she said with a smile, "Good morning Mister, there's no way I can express my thanks to you, and I can only repay you in my next life." Master Pan said quietly, "Mother! Why the next life?" Lady Ni's cheeks immediately burned and she was shocked and embarrassed at the same time. She stared at him and said angrily, "Xiao Pan you really don't think before you speak, this is extremely rude towards Mister and your Mother, you..."

Xiang Shaolong knows that it is going to be difficult for her to round this embarrassment up nicely, and Master Pan is a stubborn kid as well, so he quickly said, "Xiao Pan, aren't you going to make your escape quickly?" Master Pan laughed and ran away. The atmosphere became even more awkward. Lady Ni was at a loss, it seems wrong to try to explain, but it seems even worse if she doesn't explain.

Xiang Shaolong looked at this virtuous lady looking so alluring lost, her

resolution wavering and knows that the longer they stay in silence, the more the ambiguity of their feelings will increase. He thought it interesting and deliberately did not speak, but just looked at her eyes. Lady Ni stole a look at him and their eyes met, she suddenly felt her body going soft, her heart beating erratically. What should she do? How can she lose her composure like that. Xiang Shaolong saw that she's almost dying of embarrassment and thought that Master Pan was right, it's better to benefit oneself rather than others. He asked quietly, "Shall we take a seat in Linzhong Pavilion?" Linzhong Pavilion is the deepest part of Lady Ni's courtyard, in the dense osmanthus forest, there is a hidden and exquisite pavilion, a good place for a rendezvous.

Isn't this considered a date.

Lady Ni was stunned for a moment and lifted her head to look at him, confusion filled her eyes, unable to speak. Xiang Shaolong knows that her heart was confused and wavering between the 2 extremes of preserving her chastity for her dead husband and to give herself to him in gratitude. He did not wait for her reply and seeing that there's no one around, he pulled her slender hands and walked towards the osmanthus forest. Lady Ni was pulled along by him and was unable to break free so she had no choice but to follow him and lightly reprimanded him, "Mister Xiang..." Xiang Shaolong was holding her soft hand, his heart seems to be filled with sweetness. He felt the excitement of flirting with a virtuous lady so he has no time to think whether she's willing or not. He just pulled her along the forest and his eyes brightened, the pavilion appeared right in front of him.

Lady Ni struggled hard and broke lose of his grasp. She stopped moving

immediately, lowered her head and said sadly, "Will Mister respect Zhao Ni's reputation?" Xiang Shaolong knows that the more haste, the less speed, so he said gently, "I, Xiang Shaolong is not someone who will force another, come! Let us just sit for a while in the pavilion and enjoy the fragrance from the osmanthus." Lady Ni said quietly, "But you must first promise me that you'll be respectful." Xiang Shaolong thought to himself, the worse is that she will not stay, because if she's willing to stay, there's no way she can escape his clutches. If she can escape, he'll change his family name from Xiang to Zhao. He walked into the pavilion, sat on the stone ledge and signaled to her respectfully, "Lady please come in for a short stay."

Lady Ni seems to have forgotten that Xiang Shaolong has not agreed to her condition of being respectful, and she walked daintily up the pavilion and leaned on the stone ledge next to him. Because Xiang Shaolong was sitting on the ledge, their height is now about the same. The 2 faces met straight on, 2 pairs of eyes interlocked. This time Lady Ni was braver and did not look away, just that she looked lost and her bosom heaved as her breath quickened, as she does not know how to hide her own feelings at all. Xiang Shaolong was overjoyed on seeing that she finally could not withstand his flirtations, and began to lose his control, but yet he cannot be overly anxious or she will not be able to accept it. He asked gently, "Can you smell the fragrance of the osmanthus?"

Lady Ni's face blushed redder and she nodded and made a sound of acknowledgement. Xiang Shaolong slowly extended his right hand carefully, and touched the side of her waist first, slowly but steadily moving his hand behind her waist and around the other side of her waist. Lady Ni was standing unsteadily and with a gasp, half of her body fell into his arms, her

soft bosom pressing tightly on his right chest. Their breathing immediately quickened. Lady Ni is shaking in his arms like a frightened bird, but she did not struggle or object. She was blushing to the ears, her heart is like a furnace, melting down the barrier of 9 years.

That is such a long time. Xiang Shaolong came close to her face, only a few inches away and almost kissing her fragrant lips and asked, "How can the fragrance of the osmanthus be compared to Lady?" Lady Ni was at a loss and said, "Didn't we agree that you will not be rude towards me?" Xiang Shaolong is an expert at handling women and knows that the more he behaves like a rascal now, the easier will he achieve his aim so he asked in surprise, "How can this be considered rude, it's a very big respect instead?" Lady Ni was shocked but she was unable to speak, because her lips were already locked by a strong and flirtatious man.

The fiery tongue teased the inside and outside of her mouth. Lady Ni has always been a regal and conservative person, even her husband before his death treated her with much respect and abided by the ancient rules. They only sleep together once a month and there's no bodily contact at all outside of bed. To her, Xiang Shaolong's invasion now is even more outrageous than what her dead husband has done to her, and this is the reason why she cannot accept Master Pan flirting with the maids. But in an ordinary royal family, the parents will usually close an eye on such matters. What is most hateful is that the way Xiang Shaolong took advantage of her is a hundred times more bold and clever than what her dead husband did. His fearlessness gave her a taste of excitement she's never felt before, until Xiang Shaolong invaded her tiny mouth did she instinctively extended her hand to push him, trying to separate the 2 lips. Her token struggle only served to fan Xiang

Shaolong's desire. Initially he was only acting rashly, but now he is consumed by a burning desire, unable to stop himself.

He knows that he cannot just stop at this forced kiss, so as his tongue intertwined with hers, he hugged her closer, one hand holding her soft waist tightly and the other hand caressing her fragile cheeks, ears, hair and tender neck. Lady Ni's hands were grabbing his collar tightly, trembling and panting, her pretty eyes closed, the intention to struggle being overwhelmed slowly by the long kiss. Xiang Shaolong's hands became naughty and slipped into her collar and when it came to her smooth and voluptuous bosom, Lady Ni gasped and her hands held his disobedient hands tightly in a death grip from outside her clothes. Xiang Shaolong knows that she is not really unwilling, but it's just a natural reaction of a woman trying to preserve their chastity so he was not disheartened. He caressed her full bosom with determined strength and moved his attack down inch by inch, and at the same time increased his attack on her mouth.

Lady Ni gasped and trembled, finally losing the defense of her chest, her bosom being taken over completely by Xiang Shaolong. The strong feeling of excitement and happiness made her hands surrender, unable to make any moves to defend at all. She lowered her hands and grabbed Xiang Shaolong's strong waist. Xiang Shaolong let his hands travel around her jade white chest, then stayed there motionless, slowly leaving her burning lips and lowered his head to study her pretty face. Lady Ni's mouth was opened due to her heavy breathing, and she slowly raised her lids, and it seems that she was looking at him angrily for a moment before closing her eyes again in embarrassment.

This look is even more effective than any flirtations. Xiang Shaolong removed

his hands from her clothes and touched her taut and long legs. Lady Ni gasped in surprise and caught hold of his hand, her eyes begging him. Xiang Shaolong caressed her legs, slowly moving up while his lips came towards her mouth again.

Right at this intense moment, the sounds of maids calling could be heard. The both of them were startled and separated. Lady Ni panted, "Please, stop her, don't let her see me like this." Xiang Shaolong pinched her thigh hard before walking out of the woods and stopped the pretty maid who was running towards him and asked, "What's the matter?" The pretty maid blushed and curtsied before saying, "Master Tao from the Wu residence is looking for Mister. Sister Xiaozhao from Lady Ya's residence has accompanied him here." Xiang Shaolong replied, "Will sister please ask him to wait a moment, I'll be right there." The pretty maid said, "Mister just call me Ying'er!" and after giving him a sweet smile, left.

Xiang Shaolong was in high spirits and when he returned to the pavilion, Zhao Ni had already slipped away. He gave a bitter smile and returned to the hall to meet Tao Fang. Tao Fang looked well traveled and when he saw him, he said in a low voice, "We just received secret news, this trip you're making to send Third Princess to Wei's capital Daliang is not without danger. Not only are the horse thieves eyeing you, it seems that the state of Qi wants to spoil this marriage arrangement between Wei and Zhao, and they're getting someone to spoil Zhao Qian's chastity. Shaolong must be very careful." Xiang Shaolong exclaimed in surprise, "This should be a highly secretive affair, how did the news leak out?" Tao Fang sighed, "Naturally someone leaked the news deliberately. From what I see, this traitor would either be Zhao Mu or Prince Shaoyuan. N Xiang Shaolong was stunned, "What good will this do

them? Prince Shaoyuan will be in the same boat as me, if we're attacked, he'll be in danger as well!" Tao Fang replied, "It may be a complicated affair, I've come specially to remind you, the journey will begin tomorrow."

Xiang Shaolong remembered the Juzi token, and after telling him to send someone to give it to him, sent him off after chatting for a while longer. He was just contemplating whether to return when Lady Ni's maid Ying'er came to inform him that she'd like to see him. Xiang Shaolong was a little surprised and followed her into the house. In the study he saw Lady Ni who was now back to her respectable self. After Ying'er closed the door and left, Xiang Shaolong walked forward cautiously and asked gently, "Is Lady is upset with me for being rude?" Lady Ni stared at him lovingly, lowered her head and said, "You've been rude for a long time, so how can I blame Mister?" Xiang Shaolong felt a rush of desire and grabbed her soft hands, saying with a smile, "I'm pleasantly surprised by Lady's admiration!" Lady Ni's pretty face blushed again, and allowed him to toy with her slender hands and complained, "Mister will be going on a mission to Wei tomorrow. Hai! How do you expect me to spend this time?" Xiang Shaolong was ecstatic, on hearing such heartfelt words, he pulled her into his arms, his mouth moving over her face as he said, "Time is short, will Lady blame me for being too fast?"

Lady Ni's dailty body softened and she shook her head, lowering it. Xiang Shaolong felt his desire burning and as he kissed her, he loosened her clothes. Lady Ni let go of all restrictions and allowed him to do as he wants, even encouraging him with her tongue's fiery reaction, totally enrapturing Xiang Shaolong. Chaste women like this who have restrained themselves for so long, once they release their feelings, are frequently more vigorous than

lascivious women. Lady Ni is like that, her long suppressed feelings erupted like water busting out from the mountains. The two of them were entwined for more than 2 hours before they stopped for lunch.

Master Pan came back excitedly and announced, “I defeated another 2 people, they all want you to become their Teacher.” He then looked perplexedly at his mother who now has a glow that is not usually seen. Lady Ni is really lousy, and she blushed in front of her son. She couldn’t bear to leave Xiang Shaolong either, and she looked thoroughly enticing. Master Pan looked at Xiang Shaolong and asked happily, “Teacher and Mother...” Lady Ni was embarrassed and overjoyed at the same time and reprimanded, “I won’t allow Xiao Pan to speak further.” Master Pan stuck his tongue out and giggled but he stopped talking and started eating energetically instead.

Xiang Shaolong felt a rush of desire again and touched her thighs under the table, a feeling of bravery welling up in him. If he cannot protect the women he love, how can he be considered a hero. Su Nu and Shu’er are dead, he will not allow another tragedy to fall on any of his woman. Once he thought of this, he’s filled with valor, and resurrected again.

Chapter 10

The Night is Painfully Short

He went back to Lady Ya's place, Ting Fangshi, Chunying and the other 3 maids were waiting in the hall. With the looming parting, they all have endless sweet nothings to say. Xiang Shaolong may be flirtatious but he's never had this experience of being surrounded by beauties, gentleness and warmth. Although he was thoroughly enjoying himself, but all these attentions proved too much and he can only suffer in silence. After having a tired nap, it was already dark when he woke up. He moved a little and immediately Ting Fangshi and Wu Tingfang who were entwined around him woke up immediately. Wu Tingfang pouted, "Fang'er doesn't care! I want to go with you to Wei." Xiang Shaolong was startled and was thoroughly awakened, secretly thinking to himself that it's already a huge headache looking after Lady Ya and Zhao Qian, so how can he add Wu Tingfang into this. If the King of Zhao thought that he plans to slip away with his beauty that'd be even worse, so he hurriedly consoled her and using all his tactics managed to convince Wu Tingfang to abandon the idea.

By now the 4 maids have entered to help them wash up and change. Xiang Shaolong speedily dressed himself and went out of the room. Before he reached the hall, he could hear Lady Ni and Lady Ya talking and was greatly surprised and went in. Lady Ni saw him coming and her head lowered. Xiang Shaolong felt a loving pity well up in his heart, knowing that she is throwing aside her reputation to grab a chance to spend time with him before he leaves for Wei. He sat down between the 2 ladies and boldly hugged their

waists. Lady Ya was astonished and asked unbelievably, "You have already..." Lady Ni nodded her head shyly and said, "Sister Ya please do not laugh at Zhao Ni." Lady Ya exclaimed, "And you were pretending to be proper in front of me earlier." Xiang Shaolong pinched Xhao Ya's waist and reproached her, "Ya'er!"

Lady Ya totally obeys him so on hearing that, she stopped talking but just smiled. Lady Ni whispered in his ear, "Will Xiang Lang blame Zhao Ni for being wanton?" Xiang Shaolong chortled, "Why would I? The more wanton you are the happier I am." Lady Ni did not expect him to answer her so loudly and she was so embarrassed she tried to hide herself in his arms, but her body was heating up. Lady Ya smiled, "It seems that Ya'er will have to give way tonight, but let me discuss some business with Xiang Lang first." She blinked at Xiang Shaolong and added, "Where would you like Lady Ni to await your attentions?" Lady Ni was thoroughly embarrassed and can only listen on shyly, not objecting at all. Xiang Shaolong might as well be thoroughly outrageous and he said with a laugh, "Lady Ni shall wait for me at the pool, I'll come and frolic with you in the water later." Lady Ni stood up weakly, and left obediently like a little lamb.

The 2 of them watched as her beautiful silhouette disappeared behind the door, exchanged a glance and smiled, their hands clasped tightly together. Lady Ya said seriously, "I went to see Imperial brother, but he's unable to give us more men, how worrying." She sighed and said, "The journey from here to Daliang will take at least 3 months, and we'll need to cross a huge river and countless deserted mountains and trails. After we enter Wei, we still need to visit the 4 cities Dangying, Chaoge, Guiling and Huangchi, each step of the way could be a danger." Xiang Shaolong was silent for a moment before he

asked, "Did Lady and that Prince Shaoyuan ever had an affair?" Lady Ya nodded her head guiltily. Xiang Shaolong was extremely unhappy and did not say anything. Lady Ya exclaimed in fear, "Shaolong! Please don't be like that, Ya'er has changed for the better now." Xiang Shaolong is after all a magnanimous person, so he sighed, "I'm already on bad terms with Prince Shaoyuan, and now with your old relation with him, things will become even more complicated." Lady Ya said apologetically, "Ya'er knows she's wrong." She tried to change the subject, "Prince Shaoyuan will bring with him his 2 most beloved concubines and 200 warriors with him, I'm afraid he'll try to go against you at every opportunity."

Xiang Shaolong said somberly, "I'm not afraid of him trying to be difficult with me, but I'm most afraid that he'll gang up with outsiders to deal with us. If he's intent on not returning from this trip, he'll have the guts to do anything." Lady Ya replied, "I have chosen 4 people from my own residence. These 4 people are not only brave and highly skilled, there's no doubt about their loyalty as well. I've also arranged for Cheng Xu to be your assistant. This person is indebted to me because I helped him when he faced the punishment of clan extermination, so he'll certainly work hard for us honestly." Xiang Shaolong was a little assured and said, "I heard that the state of Qi is planning to spoil this marriage union, who are the formidable people that they have?" Lady Ya sucked in a deep breath and said slowly, "The state of Qi has a mysterious person, called Xiao Weimou. This person thinks that beasts are most favored by heaven and earth, so if men wants to return to nature and be one with heaven and earth, we must follow out desires, and the strong will devour the weak without any need for hesitation. And to become the strong, we must learn from tigers and lions and sharpen the claws and teeth. Therefore he and his disciples are all terrible warriors

who rape, pillage and murder. They usually live deep in the mountains, forcing the men and women they kidnap to produce offspring for them and be part of their indecent play.”

Xiang Shaolong asked in surprise, “How can the King of Qi tolerate such fiends committing evil in Qi?” Lady Ya replied, “Among the 6 states, Qi’s neighbour Fuyuan was second to the state of Chu. After the battle of Maling, they replaced Wei and became leader of the various states in the east, and they were even put on the same standing as Qin and they were called Emperor of West and Emperor of East. They were expanding but in the end the united forces of Qin, Chu and us attacked their capital Linzi. In the end Yan’s Yueyi took over about 70 cities, but there was a Tian Dan from Qi and the newly crowned King of Yan fell into Tian Dan’s trap and changed the commander at the last minute. Therefore Tian Dan was able to sweep the Yans out of Qi but their resources were greatly depleted as well.” Xiang Shaolong nodded his head, “I understand, its because the King of Qi has limited resources, that’s why he has to rely on and tolerate such vicious men to work for him.” Lady Ya said, “The person relying on them is Tian Dan. We’ve always suspected that Tian Dan and Xiao Weimou are from the same clan although they have different family names. This Xiao Weimou is highly skilled and can fight a lion with his bare hands, kill tigers and leopards, and his sexual appetite is higher than normal. Each night he must have at least 10 women before he can have a good night’s sleep, and he only helps Dian Dan assassinate his political enemies or travel to other states to engage in secret missions. If this person is to come personally, we’ll be in even more danger. Ya’er would rather kill herself than end up in his hands.”

Xiang Shaolong was alarmed at hearing all these, and after consoling her for a

while, Wu Tingfang and Ting Fangshi came in. Lady Ya knew his intentions so she helped him hide from the 2 ladies so that he can go to the pool. The maids were just adding hot water into the pool, Xiang Shaolong dismissed all the maids and went to Lady Ni and carried her up and into the warm pool fully clothed. Lady Ni has always been prim and proper all her life, and did not expect that she'd ever meet with such an unconventional and unrestrained flirt. As she gasped in surprise, she immediately became a wet lady, showing off the beautiful outline of her body. Once he thought of his journey tomorrow and the uncertain future, he immediately became uninhibited and launched an all out attack on this beauty. Lady Ni was thinking of the same thing and received his favors with all her heated feelings.

As they entangled with each other, Lady Ni begged with tears falling down her face, "Xiang Lang! You must take care of yourself and come back safe to see Zhao Ni and Xiao Pan." Xiang Shaolong asked, "If I were to leave the state of Zhao, are you willing to follow me?" Lady Ni was startled, "Are you thinking of betraying Imperial bother?" Xiang Shaolong sighed, "I'm just planning for the worst! Zhao Mu will certainly not tolerate me, and I am not someone who will just stay and be slaughtered." Lady Ni nodded her head, "Imperial brother is really useless to put so much trust on such a conniving man. Zhao Mu has designs on me as well, and tried many times to summon me to his place but I rejected him." Xiang Shaolong thought that Zhao Mu may be one of the men that Master Pan fears will one day get his Mother and sighed secretly. Now that Lady Ni has given in to him, all the more Zhao Mu will not let him off.

Lady Ni said determinedly, "My heart now belongs to you, no matter where

Xiang Lang goes, Zhao Ni is willing to stay by your side forever even if I have to work hard.” Xiang Shaolong felt intoxicated and kissed her hard. At the same time he made this promise in his heart, “No matter how difficult the future will be, I must strive to survive in this turbulent warring states for the ones that I love and carve out an outstanding career. Xiang Shaolong will never be blindly loyal to anyone, but only loyal to my own ideals.”

Before dawn the next day, Xiang Shaolong left, accompanied by the tears of Wu Ting Fang, Zhao Ni and the rest.

End of Book 02